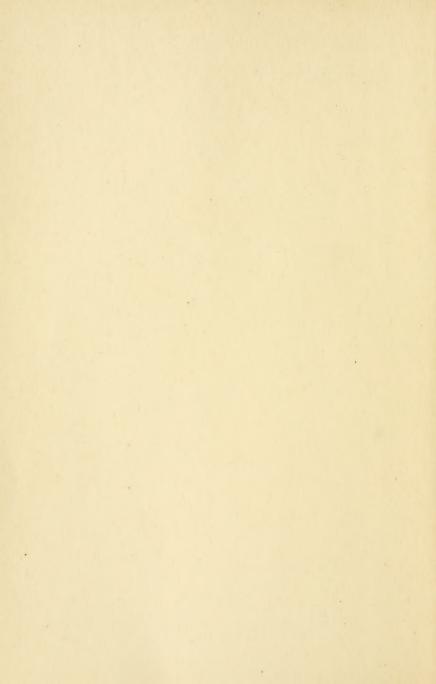




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HIS COURTSHIP



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They walked on in silence

HIS COURTSHIP

BY

HELEN R. MARTIN

AUTHOR OF
TILLIE: A MENNONITE MAID



Illustrated by Alice Barber Stephens

NEW YORK

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HIS COURTSHIP



In spite of the welcome solitude afforded for study by a summer's sojourn at the Morningstar farm, young Doctor Peter Kinross, rather excessively fastidious in his personal habits, found the lack of creature comforts not one of the least annoying of the circumstances with which he had to contend in this primitive household.

He had just been demanding rather irritably of the shaggy little farmer, his host, why a bathroom had not been put into the house when it was renovated for summer boarders; and the farmer, standing over him as he sat at his belated breakfast in the kitchen, was replying with a logic which left his protagonist dumb.

"Firstly, it's contrary to Scripture."

"How the devil do you make that out?" Kinross inquired, unaware of how such epithets startled the unaccustomed ears of the farmer's wife and of the girl, Eunice, who waited on him.

"How I make that out?" Morningstar repeated. "Because the Scriptures is silent on the subject."

Which of course left Kinross with nothing to

say. He lifted his glass of skimmed milk and

sipped it, with half closed eyes.

"Another reason," Morningstar laid it off, "there was less sickness among our ancestors of bygone times in the past than there is now when bath-rooms is the common lot of all."

Kinross did not contradict it.

"Again: I oncet heerd of a man being drownded in a bath-tub of hot water."

Kinross had no answer for an argument so incontrovertible.

"And yet again: Gawd certainly intended fur the folks to wash in cold water, or he'd of made all the water hot."

Kinross' silence apparently accepted this dogmatic statement.

"Kin you deny it?" Morningstar triumphed over him.

"I would not presume to."

"I guess anyhow not! Well, then, you know now why I don't have no bath-room. If folks would read more in the Book, and hesitate more, they'd see how sinful some things is. Folks is just a little ignorant about some things. They're not enough loosed of the world. Pride has come into the church that it's something shameful! There's too much joining church to enjoy ourselves instead of to serve Gawd!"

And swelling with his easy success, old Morn-

ingstar shambled out of the room, leaving his defeated boarder to the contemplation of his impossible breakfast.

The kitchen in which he ate was also the family living room, as all Pennsylvania Dutch farm-house kitchens are. It was a large, bright room, very simply furnished, but spotlessly clean, and of a certain homely cosiness.

The breakfast consisted of cold corned beef, greasy sausage, several kinds of very pale, lardy-looking pies, and a plate piled high with iced cake.

"Eunice!" Mrs. Morningstar shrilly called to the young girl, her adopted daughter, who had disappeared into the outer kitchen. "Here's the Doc eatin' dry bread-and-butter yet! Where's the spread?"

The relevancy of this inquiry not being apparent, a "spread" in Dr. Kinross' vocabulary being an outside cover to a bed, he glanced up as Eunice appeared in the doorway, to listen to her answer, though, to tell the truth, he was not so curious to learn where the "spread" was as to hear the sound of the girl's voice. In the ten days that he had spent at the farm, he had not once heard her utter a word, though he saw her three times a day at the table. This strange silence, with some other inexplicable things about her, had begun to "get on his nerves." He had come out to this farm

to be quiet and undisturbed, and here, rather to his chagrin, was a Mystery rising on his horizon.

He waited, with his glass half way to his lips,

to hear the girl's reply.

She came across the kitchen carrying a dish of apple jelly in one hand and a saucer of apple butter in the other. There was a grace in the movements of her young, slim figure that was conspicuously lacking in Mrs. Morningstar's own daughter of the same age; her eyes were, as always, downcast, as though to veil a soul she did not wish to discover to those about her. Kinross had never yet succeeded in discovering the colour of her eyes. Somehow, the girl always bore about her an air of detachment from her surroundings—almost like one moving in a dream. Just now, she scarcely seemed conscious of him at all, as she placed the two dishes on the table before him, and then turned and walked out of the room.

His piqued curiosity increased his sense of irritation with things in general to positive ill-temper. This dainty-looking adopted daughter of the household, who, he had at first thought, must be a fair lily among gross weeds, so delicate her features, so graceful her movements, and so appealing to his poetic sense her frail beauty (in spite of his professed misogyny)—even she was probably no exception in the generally bucolic atmosphere of the Morningstar farm-house—for a more cow-like

herd of people he had certainly never encountered.

Was she not an exception? Then why this constantly deepening impression on his mind of an indefinable charm, a vague mystery, enveloping the beautiful girl who drudged at her household tasks in apathetic and stupid contentment, with apparently not a thought or instinct above her narrow, monotonous round of work; too dull even to share the curiosity and interest of the rest of the family concerning their "gent'man boarder," and too phlegmatic to resent her foster mother's unjust and often tyrannical partiality to her own daughter Ollie?

More than once he had been on the point of asking Mrs. Morningstar to tell him something of Eunice's history. But some subtle instinct, which he had never analysed, had held him in check. Perhaps it was a chivalrous aversion to prying into what the girl herself so evidently wished to conceal. Perhaps he was not, after all, in a hurry to have the interesting mystery explained away into a mere commonplace circumstance, the usual outcome of interesting mysteries.

"Well," he demanded of Mrs. Morningstar when, after Eunice had disappeared, the landlady stood beside him and refilled his glass with milk, her stout bulk a grotesque contrast to the insignificant stature of her husband who had been overpowering him with his logic a few moments before, "where is the spread? She didn't tell you."

"But she brang 'em!" exclaimed the woman in astonishment. "Here!" shoving towards him the jelly and the apple butter.

"The spread?" he repeated blankly.

"Ain't them spreadin's?" she asked, a touch of wounded feeling mingled with her puzzled surprise. "To be sure, some calls 'em the smear. But," she added discriminatingly, "I think that's Dutch!"

To propitiate her he helped himself, experi-

mentally, to some of the apple butter.

"We're gettin' two new boarders till this dinner a'ready," she remarked, pushing a pie within his reach, though she must know by this time that he never ate her pies—not even at breakfast!

Her statement appeared to be a blow to him. Thrusting the apple butter from him, he stared up at her, chagrin and keen disappointment in his face.

"Mister he goes this dinner to fetch 'em on the buggy out," she informed him. "One of 'em's overstudied the brain goin' to college. Yes," she insisted argumentatively, "there is such a thing as overstudyin' the brain. Especially fur a country person where ain't used to it still. To be sure, you bein' a doctor that way, you'd know yourself the brain kin be overstudied."

He did not rouse himself to explain to her that

he was not a doctor of drugs, but of Philosophy. It would involve so many questions on her part, and so much explanation on his—and the day was already hot.

"Do you think you'd better risk taking two more boarders?" he asked her doubtfully, with the faint hope of averting the impending calamity. "Wou't it give you a lot more to do? And you are

busy from morning to night now."

"You think?" she laughed. "Och, no, I ain't overworked. I can stand a good bit yet. Yous tony towners with your such wonderful white hands—even on the men," she added, unable to keep a bit of contempt from her honest voice, while her eyes rested on Dr. Kinross' capable-looking but well-kept hands as he daintily knocked off the top of an egg-shell, "yous don't know what work is! Anyhow, if it does overdo me to take two more boarders, it'll be a little on the make, too, you see."

"Ah!" he exclaimed, his gloom lifting a little, "I'll pay you the price of board for three if you'll send them word not to come and let me continue to

have the run of the place in peace."

Mrs. Morningstar's fat face grew long in astonishment. Such a reckless and apparently pointless waste of money was a thing incomprehensible to the Pennsylvania Dutch mind.

"Are you some bashful or what?" she curiously inquired.

"I guess I'm what. Come, will you do it?"

"Are you passin' a joke mebbe?" she questioned uncertainly.

"Never was a man more serious. I'm willing to pay for the rare quiet I've enjoyed out here the past ten days. Will you send them word they can't

come?" he urged.

"Now if you'd only spoke sooner!" she said regretfully. "To be sure, it would of paid better to get the price of three fur one. But Pop he wrote 'em a postal in, last Saturdays a'ready, tellin' 'em they have the dare to come Wednesday dinners. So this dinner he fetches 'em. There ain't time no more to send 'em word different."

"He has already gone in to the station for them?" Kinross asked in a tragic voice.

"No, he starts at eleven. It ain't no eleven

o'clock yet."

"If you had only told me before! Well," he gave it up, rising from the table, "I'll have to bear up under it—or get out, I guess."

"Any other young feller as good a looker and as tony as what you are yet, would be *glad* fur two young lady boarders comin' oncet!" she reasoned, following him to the door, her whole person radiating her curious wonder.

Kinross stopped short on the threshold and turned upon her. "What! Two girls!"

The consternation in his face increased her won-

der. "Well," she argued, "what's the matter with that? A body can't help fur her sex, can she?"

"I certainly didn't anticipate when I came here that I'd be bothered with two girls on the place! They'll expect me to be sitting around with them!"

"Och, well," she poked him playfully with her elbow, "you might be glad if they do want you to set alongside of 'em. Is it that you ain't much fur sociability that way?" she tried to solve the problem. "You never looked scairt of Ollie or Eunice."

"They have some sense. They don't cackle at me. They let a man alone. The first girls I ever saw who did!"

Mrs. Morningstar laughed boisterously. "An' here I was tellin' Ollie every day since you come, why didn't she perk up and speak some conwersation to you that way. It ain't that Ollie's ignorant that makes her keep so quiet before you," she came to the defence of her daughter. "But she's some backward, you bein' a towner and her, she was always a country girl still."

"She talks a good deal more than Eunice does, though—doesn't she?" he put out a feeler.
"Och, her!" she retorted contemptuously;

"Och, her!" she retorted contemptuously; "she's dumm!" (Stupid.) "But Ollie she's got an elegant education," she affirmed, standing in the kitchen doorway with her bared arms resting

on her ample hips, while Dr. Kinross leaned against a pillar of the porch, his eyes following the young chickens which ran about on the grass. "I left her go to school till she was fifteen a'ready. Eunice she was more fur books and studyin' and all like that than what Ollie was, but," she said disparagingly, "she ain't got Ollie's nice education; but her bein' just adopted that way and not my own flesh and blood, I took her out of school till she was twelf. She cried wonderful to be left keep on, but I tole her beggars couldn't be choosers and she must earn her livin'. So then she never said nothin' more about it. Ollie she can conwerse pretty." Mrs. Morningstar suddenly dropped the subject of her foster-child and returned to the more congenial theme of her own daughter, as she jealously observed that the mention of Eunice seemed to arrest the wandering attention of her hearer. "And Ollie she knows just the right words to put in-but sometimes she's so stubborn-headed fur me, she won't conwerse—like what she's been since you come. But to be sure," she conceded, "if you like 'em better quiet-" she paused uncertainly, but her look and tone implied that that altered the case and involved her forgiveness of Ollie's obstinacy in refusing to display her conversational powers.

"Eunice has had no schooling since she was twelve years old?" Kinross instantly asked, when Mrs. Morningstar's pausing to take breath gave him a chance to put in a question.

"No, and she's wonderful dumm towards what

Ollie is."

"Humph!" he grunted.

"Yes, and that ongrateful she is fur all we done fur her yet—us leavin' her go to school till she was twelf a'ready and her not our own flesh and blood,—and then when she had to come off of school, she took on, it was somepin awful!"

"But a twelve-year old girl is hardly capable of realising what she is losing in having no school-

ing?" he said questioningly.

"She was always wonderful fur studyin'—full much so. A body couldn't get no work out of her, oncet she got holt of a book—and that's why Pop he sayed now she must come off school, he sayed, or she'd soon not be earnin' her feed!"

"Umph!" again grunted Kinross, surprised into a pang of pity for the flower-like girl who was the household drudge to the farmer's family.

"Say!" Mrs. Morningstar abruptly demanded, "do you want fur me to tell these here two young ladies when they come, that you ain't much fur sociability and that they're to leave you be and not bother you any, you bein' some queer?"

"Now, Mrs. Morningstar," he smiled, "you are a friend in need. Suppose you do warn them

off! Where are they from?"

"From into town. Their names is Georgiana

Ellery and Daisy Parks."

Kinross lifted his head and looked at Mrs. Morningstar, surprise, annoyance, consternation, in his face.

"Gods and little fishes!"

He pulled his Panama hat over his eyes, turned abruptly and strode away.

Mrs. Morningstar stood stolidly where he left her, gazing after him as he walked with long steps through the orchard towards the woods where he usually spent most of the day; and finally she shook her head and drew a long breath.

"It beats me what fur a man he is, anyhow!"

A HALF hour later, his tall length stretched under the trees of the wood that skirted the north side of the Morningstar farm,

Dr. Kinross gave vent to his vexation.

"Georgiana Ellery and Daisy Parks! The daughter of old Prexy and his niece! Could a man have worse luck? Good-bye to my liberty! No more doing as I please—and being as uncivilised and bucolic as primitive man! What, in the name of all the gods, possesses two such highly civilised beings to want to spend any time out here? . . . Why, they can't eat the cooking, it's out of the question. I couldn't myself if I didn't voluntarily suspend consciousness while staving off starvation -a small price to pay for such days of freedom as I've had! I'd think these girls were pursuing me—if I didn't know they were not. But," he groaned, "they'll think it a jolly lark to find me here! They'll get out of it all there is in it. Damn!" he thumped the ground; "I'll take care that there'll be precious little in it for them. I'm not going to be bully-ragged into spoiling my vacation by two clucky girls!"

Such the misanthropic sentiments and such the

language with which Peter Kinross faced a situation complicated by the fact that the expected arrivals were the daughter and niece, respectively, of the President of the college in which he himself was the Professor of Psychology.

Dr. Kinross, however, had never seen either of these girls, inasmuch as, during the past year since he had taken the Chair of Psychology, they had both been away at a woman's college. But he had heard a great deal about Miss Ellery, the President's daughter. And some of Kinross' fellow professors who were apt to badger him on his hardness of heart towards the gentler sex, had predicted his speedy surrender to the beauty, culture, and wealth of Miss Ellery when she should return to college.

"It will do me good to see her turn you down!" the professor of literature had declared with feeling, speaking out of the depth of his own bitter experience at the hands of the fair Georgiana.

But these predictions had made so little impression upon Kinross that with the immediate prospect of meeting Miss Ellery, the only interest he felt in her was a curiosity to understand the mystery of her having chosen to come to the Morningstar farm to spend her summer vacation—a girl notoriously fastidious in her tastes and so much of a belle among the clever men of the college faculty that her voluntarily coming to bury herself in such an out of the way place as this farm seemed to him

a second mystery thrust upon his unwilling contemplation and calculated to supersede that other mystery of the girl Eunice, which in the past fortnight had been constantly arresting his attention.

The truth about Dr. Kinross was that he was afraid of young girls. All the circumstances of his boyhood and youth had tended to pervert a natural super-sensitiveness into an awkward and painful self-consciousness in the presence of women. His mother having died in his infancy, his acquaintance with the feminine sex in his childhood had been almost entirely confined to the negro servants of his father's household. The whole nature of the boy had so needed a mother's fostering love that his lack of it had led to the perversion of some of his best qualities—his native tenderness, his bigsouled generosity, the instinctive spontaneity of his character. With his incipient manhood he had developed, through unfamiliarity of intercourse, an awe of girls that had caused him untold sufferings if forced into any conversational responsibilities with them. His case grew so serious that his father tried to help him out by offering him five dollars for every girl to whom he would talk at a party. As he was not mercenary, this expedient did not work.

The social ease and fluency of his younger brother, Burton, seemed to Peter in those days a height of achievement to which he looked up with envy and admiration. But Burton's view of the variation between them was ruefully expressed one day to Miss Wolcott, their nearest family neighbour.

"Pete plants himself in a corner, at a party, scowls, hasn't a word to say, can't dance and can't play cards. And he'll make an average of six crushes at every party that dad makes him go to. I can dance, play cards, converse and make myself agreeable—and I don't average one crush a month! How would you explain it?"

"Crush?" genteelly inquired Miss Wolcott, a

bachelor maiden of thirty-five.

"Beg pardon—I mean none of the girls get stuck on me. But they pursue Pete to his corner and when he is rude and disagreeable to them, they say he is original and 'magnetic.' You wouldn't suppose, would you, they'd take to a stiff like Pete?"

"It would be much more reasonable of them to take to a polished and accomplished gentleman like you, Burton," said Miss Wolcott consolingly; and Burton accepted her sympathetic view with complacency and with a high opinion of Miss Wolcott's judgment.

As Peter grew older he succeeded in conquering, after long and extraordinary struggles with himself, at least the external signs of his inward perturbation in the society of young ladies. But his

mental attitude toward the sex continued to be a mixture of suspicion, contempt, curiosity, mystification and attraction, which so baffled and irritated him that he had come to look upon any contact with girls as an element disturbing to all intellectual labour or anything else in his life that was really worth while. Little did he dream that had he really been as indifferent as he thought he was, they could not so have disturbed him, and that his apparent aversion to them was only the reverse side of his really strong attraction to them. It was the wound his own awkwardness gave to his self-love and egotism that made him shun, as a burnt child the fire, both the persons and the occasions which made him appear at his worst instead of his best. And so, his latent ideality had, through sheer false shame, turned into cynical detestation.

His social life at Meckville College had been a continual battle in trying (on the whole, vainly) to elude the flattering attentions society was determined to heap upon the good-looking new young professor who had the very unusual attraction of a comparatively large independent fortune. The fact that he was difficult and elusive only added zest to the quest.

And yet, there really lived in the background of his consciousness, hardly recognised by himself, an ideal of love, a passionate yearning to be met, to find a perfect comradeship. He did not himself know how deep was the longing and the need in his soul for some relation in life in which his strongly emotional nature could find outlet.

So far was he from conceiving the possibility of discovering in the notably charming and gifted Miss Ellery his soul's inevitable companion, that there came to him, as he lay on his back, gazing up into the trees of the old forest, a grotesque plot for eluding the society of the expected damsels and insuring the continuance of his freedom.

"I swear I'll do it!" he exclaimed, and his shout of laughter at the original amusement he foresaw

in his scheme echoed through the woods.

"It will give me a chance," he reflected, "to study the psychology of the youthful feminine such as rarely comes to a philosopher! An opportunity to observe it at first hand, when it is off its guard and quite unveiled! Here's sport!"

But the young ladies would arrive at noon. There was no time to be lost. He sprang from the ground, gathered up the books that were his daily companions in his rambles, and started for the farm.

On his way, he speculated as to whether the Morningstars would bear him out in his plot. He foresaw the stupefaction of their unimaginative minds before his behaviour. And Eunice—would this galvanise her into some signs of animation? If, before the rôle he was about to play, that girl

could possibly maintain the aloofness, the apparent unconsciousness of what was under her eyes, the blind, deaf and dumb demeanour that she had kept up ever since he had come to this place—if she kept it up now—well, in that case, there would be nothing left to do but cast off all reserve, and demand that she explain herself.

HEN he reached the farm, overheated from his rapid walk in the sun, he stopped at the spring-house to get a glass of water before going into the kitchen.

It was with a sudden sharp thrill that, as he stepped into the cool, shady stone room, he unexpectedly found himself alone with Eunice.

She was seated on the stone steps by the well, bending laboriously over a torn sheet of a newspaper.

As his figure suddenly darkened the door-way, she started violently, as though discovered in some shameful guilt. He was held for an instant by the picture she made, the grace of her youthful form in its tense attitude of actual fear, the beauty of her wide, frightened eyes, the exquisite delicacy of her face in its sudden whiteness. But his second thought was not so complimentary.

"What a craven little coward!" was his mental comment, with an impulse of contemptuous pity. For he had not lived here ten days without having seen that this foster-daughter of the Morningstars was down-trodden as none but a girl of weak or mean spirit would permit herself to be, and he

understood that her present sense of guilt was due to the contraband newspaper she was found idly reading when she should have been hard at work. As far as he had observed, the girl was never allowed ten minutes of relaxation from morning to-night. Also, Mr. Morningstar had strictly forbidden his household to touch the "gent'man boarder's" daily paper, which he pronounced a wily invention of Satan.

So it was only a feeling of fear that could rouse

her from her lethargy.

"It's only I," he said apologetically. "May I

come in and get a glass of water?"

She did not seem much reassured by the fact that it was only he. She sank back limply against the step as he came forward and helped himself, but her eyes, as they followed him, did not lose their strained expression nor her face regain its colour. He watched her curiously as he slowly drank a glass of water. The newspaper was crumpled into her lap and her gaze seemed held by his in a sort of fascination.

"Don't be afraid," he smiled upon her. "I

won't tell."

She did not answer. She seemed spellbound. He wondered whether he could make her talk. At least he had made her look at him.

"It's one of my newspapers, isn't it?" he asked.

"Yes," she breathed.

"Old Morningstar makes me hand them over to him to be burnt every evening. How did you rescue one?"

She swallowed hard as she managed to answer in a voice just above a whisper, "He puts them in the stove to be burnt when I light the fire for breakfast. I take them out."

- "Eh? And then snatch chances like this for reading them?"
 - " Yes."

"Um-m," he commented thoughtfully. "Upon my word!"

They looked at each other for an instant without

speaking.

- "You had never read a newspaper, I suppose, before I came here?"
 - " No."

"Do you find them amusing?"

"Amusing?" she repeated, the strained expression in her eyes giving way to a puzzled look.

- "Well," he conceded, "perhaps you don't find them that—a daily record of crimes and accidents. Interesting, I should have said. Do you like them?" he asked, groping for words intelligible to her simplicity.
 - " Yes."

"But you can't read with much profit or pleasure when you have to snatch chance moments at them in this way?"

She did not reply.

"And much that you read would be unintelligible to you, I should say—seeing you are not accustomed to reading newspapers. I don't see how you get enough out of it to pay for such a fright as you had just now when you thought you were being caught?"

Still she did not answer.

"What a stupid creature!" he thought, marvelling that so dull a damsel should have a pair of eyes that shone like stars and a countenance of such extraordinary thoughtfulness. "Now if she were an intelligent girl, it would be interesting to get her fresh impression of a newspaper."

Suddenly, while he regarded her speculatively, sipping his water with deliberation, and she returned his gaze with a sort of fascinated concentration, the door-way was again darkened, and this time it was he who started with apprehension as Mr. Morningstar came into the spring-house. Kinross was instantly aware of the fact that the girl did not start now nor attempt to hide the newspaper. On the contrary, the presence of the scrubby little farmer seemed suddenly to dissipate the spell which he had evidently cast upon her, for she rose quite deliberately and began to gather together her crocks and cans, keeping the newspaper in her hand.

The small-eyed farmer cast a quick, suspicious glance from one to another of them.

"Mom wants fur you to hurry on in then," he

gruffly ordered the girl. "She conceited that you and Abe was spoonin' together out here. What fur does it take you so wonderful long to fetch in a couple of butter and milk yet? Mom'll jaw you, you'll see oncet! Here!"

He had caught sight of the newspaper and jerked it from her hand. "What's this to do, heh?"

"It belongs to the gentleman," the girl answered, quite unruffled.

"And you gev it to her?" the farmer asked, looking reproachfully at Kinross.

"I dropped it in here and came back to look for it. Eunice had picked it up and was going to give it to me."

"Och, well," the farmer nodded, passing it on to him. Kinross as he took it, looked hard at Eunice to see how she received his impromptu fiction, but her eyes were veiled and he could not read her face.

"Well," added Morningstar, turning to leave, you hurry on in, Eunice."

He went away, but Eunice did not so much as glance at Kinross when they were again alone for a moment. She kept right on with her work of loading herself down with her wares, and then, without a word, started for the house. He had been wondering whether it would be misplaced gallantry to offer to help her carry in her crocks and

things, and by the time she was ready to go, he had decided against it. But just as she reached the spring-house door, he bethought him to return the paper to her.

Quickly folding it into the smallest possible compass, he stepped to her side and held it out to her.

"Can't you conceal it about you?"

She turned white again as he spoke to her. "Please hide it behind the churn," she said, not raising her eyes and speaking breathlessly, "and I shall find it this evening."

"Very well."

She was gone and he turned back to do her bidding. He had just finished concealing the paper and was rising from his stooping position when again a shadow darkened the door-way and he looked up to see Eunice, with a face white to the lips and still laden with her wares, standing on the threshold.

"Will you please tell me," she began,—and he had to take a step nearer to catch her low-spoken words—"who is this Andrew Carnegie?"

He stared at her for an instant uncomprehendingly. "'This Andrew Carnegie'?"

"Of whom the newspapers make frequent mention."

"Oh!" he said, "you ask who is he?"

"If I knew, I could perhaps understand better what I read in your newspapers."

"You never heard of him before I came here with my newspapers?"

"No. Is he, perhaps, a book-agent? Or is he not a real person at all, but only a Hero?—like the Count of Monte Cristo."

"He is a very real person indeed. Rather substantial in fact. What you people call 'well-fixed,' you know. Has enough to worry through on without working. He's all the things you guessed—a book-agent, a Hero, a Monte Cristo,—with a few more thrown in."

"Oh!" she said, gazing at him with bright eyes.

The next instant the spring-house door was again clear—she was gone. But he stood still and waited. Maybe she would come back a second time. And anyway, he was too spellbound with astonishment to move.

But she did not return and he sat down on the stone steps of the well to think it out.

In spite of her simplicity, how superior she seemed to the rest of the family! None of the rest of them would have cared enough about reading the papers to have risked old Morningstar's anger. There was something even in her speech that arrested his attention. "Of whom the newspapers make frequent mention." Of whom. So very grammatical. No one else in the family would have said "of whom." And her reference to Monte Cristo!

Rather surprising. To know about Monte Cristo and never to have heard of Andrew Carnegie—what an anomaly!

Another thing. She had looked scared half to death upon his discovering her with the forbidden newspaper; but when the petty tyrant of the household, before whom his own son and daughter cringed, appeared on the scene, she had met his approach with cool indifference. Her evident bashfulness would not explain her extreme agitation with himself.

When, a little later, he rose to go to the house, he had come to no conclusion about her at all.

TH an air of gracious condescension, conscious of her own superiority, yet ready to recognise the "divinity" that dwells latent in all men, however humble, Miss Georgiana Ellery regarded the Morningstars, who, with their boarders, were gathered about the table at the early dinner hour of half past eleven. For Miss Ellery was that modern type of young college woman who self-consciously lives on what she calls "a high plane." She professed a firm faith in the accessibility of that plane to all whose latent divinity could be stirred into recognising its beauty and truth, and the serious responsibility rested upon her of letting her own light so shine that others, beholding the height upon which she moved, might be inspired to elevate their lives equally.

Most people considered Georgiana Ellery a very beautiful girl. She was of a tall regal type, her stateliness of bearing and austerity of thought rather at odds with the soft womanliness of her countenance and the mellow sweetness of her voice. In spite of the seriousness with which she took herself and her "views," a seriousness which the light-

minded found a little wearing, her forceful personality held a charm which, with her beauty, gave her a very marked distinction.

Just now, her benevolent glance moved about the table to take stock, as it were, of material. These seemingly commonplace Morningstars, she felt sure, could be reached through contact with the high thinking which it was her unrelaxing aim to express. They already possessed that plain living which she had been taught to recognise, in theory at least, as a necessary concomitant to the former.

There was, first of all, the young man who sat opposite her, the farm hand. He certainly looked capable (in spite of his rough overalls and his name, which was "Pete") of higher things. He had rather refined features. And his face was not unintelligent. His brow really suggested the possibility of "thought-power"—if haply she might awaken it.

The other men at the table, the insignificant little farmer with his keen, mouse-like face, and his stalwart son Abe who assisted his father on the farm, were perhaps a bit farther removed from the sphere of her influence. But in the freshness of her enthusiasm she was ready to try even upon them.

As for the women, there were possibilities, no doubt, in Mrs. Morningstar and decidedly so in that really pretty girl, Eunice. The only one of

them all who appeared to her rather hopelessly unreceptive was Ollie, the buxom, heavy-faced daughter of the house, whose dark, sullen countenance would have dampened an ardour even warmer than that of Miss Ellery.

Seated beside Georgiana was her cousin, Daisy Parks, whose fluffy, puffy prettiness and irresponsible air of frivolity were, to tell the truth, a bit refreshing as over against Miss Ellery's oppressive superiority.

"Now," said Mr. Morningstar as, after a long silent grace, he jerked his chair closer to the table and fell to, "just yous act yourselfs natural and

take what yous see."

He reached to the middle of the table and picked up a heavy platter of fried ham to help himself, unmindful of his guests. "We all do our own servin' in the country. To be sure, if there's children we help them. But me, I always say if it's on the table I kin git it all right!"

He laughed, with his mouth full of meat, and proceeded to stretch across the table for everything

he wanted.

"Yes," Mrs. Morningstar added in her loud, boisterous tones, as she, too, reached for what she wanted, "out here when folks goes on comp'ny, they must used theirselfs to do their own stretchin' and not expec' to be waited on."

"How quaint!" exclaimed Miss Daisy Parks.

She promptly reached far across the board for a slice of bread. "'If you want that, you must climb!" she quoted.

"Please, Daisy!" entreated Georgiana, "don't

be slangy! You promised me."

Daisy pressed her hand to her heart. "Stung again! How can I be so forgetful when I know how it bumps you, Georgie!" she said with mock remorsefulness.

"I hope," Mrs. Morningstar cried as she saw that, in spite of her urging, the boarders did not help themselves with the business-like alacrity to be looked for in those who were paying for their food, "that yous'll like my wittles. If I do say it myself, I kin cook when I know folks is comin'. To be sure sometimes they come unexpected. Yes, just so sure as I say to Pop or the girls, 'Now we'll warm up these here stumps that's left, and eat 'em up once '—then beware! Strangers is sure to come unexpected. Ain't, Ollie?"

Ollie coloured with embarrassment at being appealed to, and murmured an answer under her breath.

"Our creature comforts are of such minor importance," spoke Georgiana's musical voice, as she lifted her handsome dark head and smiled from her high plane upon the Morningstars, in a sort of benediction. "Material things absorb most of us too much, don't you think so?—leaving us too

little time for the things that are really worth while in life."

Georgiana observed that the farm-hand, Pete, looked impressed, as she spoke, as though a ray of light had penetrated his darkened mind. The rest of the family appeared unresponsive—unless, perhaps, that girl, Eunice, manifested some slight signs of receptivity—Georgiana could not be sure.

As for Miss Parks, she always hung upon Georgiana's words, as though unwilling to miss one pearl which dropped from the lips of her oracular cousin, her admiration being commensurate with her inability to grasp Georgiana's deep meanings.

Mrs. Morningstar, however, disappointingly betrayed her obtuseness to Truth by responding with an apology for her appearance. "I most always put another frock on till the afternoon a'ready and so does Ollie still (Eunice she ain't got the time to), but we didn't get 'em on yet till yous got here—so you see us lookin' some hard."

"It is yourself we wish to see—not your clothes, Mrs. Morningstar," Georgiana said encouragingly. "Externals are lost sight of when once one gets below the surface to the *real* person."

Mrs. Morningstar blushed and looked shocked, while her son, Abe, at her side, coloured all over his fat, sun-burned neck.

"To be sure," the farmer's wife replied dubiously, "I wouldn't think much of that practice—lettin' folks see you undressed."

Georgiana, whose eyes were upon Pete, noticed that he smiled. She sank back in her chair, a shade of disappointment in her face. But she would not despair. The potential god in every human soul must eventually awaken to the right touch.

"Eunice!" sharply ordered Mrs. Morningstar, her tone in addressing her foster-child noticeably unlike that in which she spoke to any one else; "don't you see the fried smashed potatoes is all? Why don't you mind yourself and fill the dish up oncet?"

The girl, without any response and with no change in the pensiveness of her countenance, rose to do as she was bid. The delicacy and refinement of her face made one expect to see her embarrassed by such rude harshness in the presence of strangers. But she did not appear to be even conscious of it.

"Doc," Mrs. Morningstar addressed "Pete," as the girl brought back the potato dish from the stove, "don't you want some more smashed potatoes?"

Miss Parks paused in her dainty sipping of her milk (the Morningstar coffee and tea being impossible) and looked interested.

"Are you a doctor?" she inquired, wonder-

ingly, as Peter, without replying to the landlady, helped himself to potatoes.

There was an instant's silence, no one offering a

reply at once.

"Och," said Mrs. Morningstar abruptly, with a confusion unaccountable to the two young ladies, "that's just a title he goes by around here still."

"Why?" pursued Miss Parks with frank curiosity.

"I don't know fur why," she said hastily. "Won't yous have some coffee? This here coffee cost fourteen cents a pound, so I think it might mebbe taste some like that there coffee we got a cup of, the time we was to Phil-delph-y and took a piece [luncheon] at Wanamaker's place, But that there coffee was, now, wonderful good-tasted! The best I ever seen. And mind to what it cost vet! Ten cents a cup! I thought I'd drop when the coloured gent'man sayed to Pop we owed a quarter apiece-me and Pop-fur just four little buckwheat cakes and a cup of coffee apiece! It spited me so I couldn't take no more enjoyment out of nothin', all the rest of the day. That give me all I wanted of goin' to a big city! That-and a awful scenery we seen in Broad Street Stationthe form of two women comin' towards usdrunk! You mind of it, Pop? I'd never witnessed such a scenery before as a woman drunk! That

there was my first and my *last* trip to Phil-delph-y. A trip to Meckville's good enough fur me after that. And such a hurryin' and a crowdin' as there is, still, in a big city! It seems as if the folks there never thinks of the Hereafter, the way they hurry along the street. Will yous have some coffee?"

The fourteen cent coffee was declined, evidently to the surprise of the rest of the family.

"Our cookin'," continued Mrs. Morningstar boastfully, "ain't done by no hired girl. When we used to be at hotellin', nineteen years back, a travellin' man ast me oncet, 'Where's your cook?' 'Me and Lizzie's her' I sayed. (Lizzie was my sister, deceased this while back a'ready.) 'Us we do our own cookin', I tole him. Well, I guess,

anyhow!"

"Yous ain't like some," spoke up Mr. Morningstar, his tone expressing his gratification at the dainty appetites of his boarders as they both declined more potatoes. "Some wants to eat their money's worth anyhow, if they're hungry or if they ain't. Now there's me," he said jocularly, "I believe I'd eat three meals at once (when one would do me) if I could get 'em fur nothin'. When I was a young man I went out West fur a while—I often had heard so much about this West, so I thought now I'd go see it fur myself oncet. Well, I stayed two years and when I come back, the first meal I took was in such a caf-fee in Phil-delphy

with a man where was goin' to buy some cattle off of me, and I saved now I'd take ovsters, oncet I had the chanct, because you couldn't git 'em in the West-so first I ordered fried (him he eat a beefsteak). Well, I eat them six fried and then I ordered a stew. Them I eat too and so I says now I take 'em raw. The hotel waiter he says to me, 'You don't live in Phil-delphy, do you?' 'No,' I says, 'I lived in the West this while back and I can't git oysters out there.' 'Yes,' the waiter he says, 'I thought so.' 'Well, when I was only half through my dozent raw ones, I didn't feel fur eatin' no more, but I'd paid fur 'em, so I hated to let 'em. I coaxed this here man where [who] was with me to eat 'em. 'No, I'm full,' he says. 'If you can't eat 'em, let 'em.' 'I don't want to see 'em wasted,' I says. 'Now, me, I ain't like you,' he says. 'If I ordered a steak and had enough when half was eat, I'd let the other half, whether I'd paid fur it or not.' But I just couldn't stand it to let them oysters and go off. 'Git your fork here.' I says to the feller. 'Help me to eat 'em,' 'No,' he says. 'You can't git 'em in the Westeat!" So I eat two more. But still there was a many on the dish. 'Now I quit!' I says and throwed down my fork; 'I can't make it!' So," he concluded with reminiscent regret, "them seven raw ones I had to let."

The effect of this recital upon Miss Ellery was

to sadden her. Her cousin Daisy, as her satellite, tried to copy her expression; but with indifferent success.

"Mister he always could eat hearty," said Mrs. Morningstar. "Me, I'm different to what he is. Mornings and evenings I can hardly eat ever. Dinner I eat pretty good. But here this winter Mister he had his pest!—three carbuncles and near fifty boils! Then he couldn't eat neither."

Georgiana tried to divert the talk to another plane. "Do you know, one thing that led me to wish to summer here, when I saw your advertisement in the paper, was your name—Morningstar—so full of suggestion. I have always thought names so significant. I thought," she said, smiling sweetly, "that I should be happy in a country home with people bearing a name so full of poetic meaning; so suggestive of the spiritual heathfulness of rural life."

Mrs. Morningstar looked bewildered. "So?" she said vaguely. "Well, if only *more* thought like you, we'd make more at keepin' summer boarders. We could accommodate a many more. We kin lay eight and set ten."

Georgiana appeared disconcerted. But she made another brave effort to turn the tide of the talk into a higher channel.

"I was led to come to you because I am unfortunately rather run down from the last crowded

months of the college year and I felt that really to regain my poise, I must get near to Nature—and that the best way to do that would be actually to go and live with the People of the Soil and really become one of them."

"And live the Simple Life," put in Daisy. "I think one could do it here, Georgiana, without the strain that it is in town. Out here," she added hopefully, "it won't require my co-operation; I'll have to live it."

"Not if there is inward rebellion," instructed Georgiana gently. "Remember, dear, the Simple Life is subjective as well as objective."

Daisy accepted it with a sigh. "I'll make a note of that," she said, gathering up the blank-book and pencil she wore suspended from her belt. She met the wondering looks of the Morningstars as she leafed her note-book. "Yes," she nodded, volunteering an explanation, "I write down things which impress me. My uncle thinks keeping a note-book may give me mental pause—""

"Poise," corrected Georgiana, blushing for her cousin.

"Poise," nodded Daisy; she always accepted Georgiana's corrections without question. "To collect Facts—Facts with no deviation from accuracy."

"It will be excellent mental discipline for you,

Daisy," said Georgiana kindly.

"My only doubt is," said Daisy anxiously, "that it isn't consistent with the Simple Life—keeping a Note-book to improve your mind. Because you know it certainly isn't 'reposeful'—keeping a Note-book. Now on the bare face of it, without any philosophy, my motto for a simple life would be, 'Let things slide.' I could live up to that," she said with conviction.

Mrs. Morningstar laughed. "Yous fetch out such big words still! Just like Doc—Pete, I mean," she quickly corrected herself. "Pete he's always spittin' them big words out too. A body'd think it would go to your brains; ain't?"

Georgiana picked up hope—her intuition as to

Pete was perhaps after all not a mistake.

"Pete has had some schooling?" she inquired. At this question, Georgiana was puzzled to observe that Eunice, who sat on the opposite side of the table from Pete, gave a slight start, raised her constantly downcast eyes, and looked at the farm-hand with a faint smile. Though his own gaze had been resting persistently, almost embarrassingly, with a bucolic, stupid stare, upon herself, Georgiana saw that he met Eunice's glance with a sudden look of interest which seemed to change his whole countenance.

But Mrs. Morningstar's reply to her question diverted her attention and arrested her sense of astonishment at this puzzling transformation. "If he had schooling? Well, I don't know if he was to college like yous. But this I kin say—he kin read wonderful good off the noospaper; why, you wouldn't know it was readin'—you'd think he was just talkin'."

"Now I'd put it the other way 'round," said Mr. Morningstar critically. "I'd say his talkin' sounds as if he was readin'. Pete," he asked,

" was you to such a college ever?"

"Well," said Pete tentatively, "I seen a college oncet when I was in town."

Daisy gave forth a little squeal of amusement; but instantly pulled her countenance straight again, with an apprehensive glance towards

Georgiana.

"Most young men," remarked Georgiana, glancing from Pete to Abe, "are discontented in the country these days, and are ambitious to get to town. I think it a pity often—country life is so much more healthful—spiritually, I mean."

Abe did not even look up, but Pete, his mouth full of potato, replied, "My job out here suits me

all right."

"Discontented?" questioned Mr. Morningstar. "We're got enough to eat and a little over. What more can a person want?"

But the usually tongue-tied daughter Ollie here spoke up. "I guess a body wants a little pleasure, too, still," she said sulkily, scowling at her father; then suddenly, overwhelmed with shyness at the sound of her own voice, she coloured violently and bent her eyes to her plate.

Mr. Morningstar's small eyes and mouth seemed to contract as he looked at her. "I ain't leavin' you run," he obstinately affirmed. "Eunice she never asts me has she the dare to go any."

"Yes, well, but," Mrs. Morningstar came to the defence of her own in loud tones, "it's some different too, with your own flesh and blood and a 'dopted child. It wouldn't become Eunice to be astin' to go. She's to work and pay fur bein' kep' ever since she was too little to work yet. Your own child, that's different again. You might leave Ollie go oncet, Pop, to this here ice-cream festible in town. She's wonderful set on it. And you don't never leave her travel in Society."

"I ain't leavin' her," he replied with quiet stubbornness. "She'd want to spend some at the festible and she'd stay late and then when she'd have to git up early to-morrow, she'd git sick fur me and I'd have to have a doctor fur her."

"Well, *leave* her oversleep her breakfast oncet. Eunice she kin do some of Ollie's work to-morrow morning, till Ollie reels fur gittin' up."

Eunice did not again raise her eyes or manifest any sign of her feelings in hearing herself thus disposed of.

"I said Ollie wasn't to go now!" Mr. Morn-

ingstar returned sharply. But Ollie scowled during all the rest of the meal.

"Well," Mr. Morningstar presently said, rising and pushing his chair away from him as he drew the back of his hand across his mouth, "I must go out back now and separate. Would yous mebbe like to see me separate?" he inquired of the young ladies.

"Separate?" questioned Daisy, her head a bit on one side, to catch a new Fact on the wing as it

were.

"To see the milk and cream separated apart by our new milk-separator where I bought off of such a agent from New York over," Mr. Morningstar explained.

"How perfectly dear!" cried Daisy, rising at once, her note-book ready in her hand. "Will you

come, Georgiana?"

"Yous kin see what runs the machinery all," the farmer said as they followed him out of the kitchen.

"Isn't it perfectly dear and quaint, Georgiana!" exclaimed Daisy volubly as they went across the room to the door; "everything is so rural!"

While Mrs. Morningstar and the two girls were clearing away the dinner, the former pronounced it as her opinion that "that Doc" was "a blackeyed sharper" who had committed some crime which made him afraid to be recognised by "towners."

O that," mused Peter Kinross, as, dressed in overalls and with his hair grotesquely plastered down with Abe Morningstar's pomatum, he strolled about at dusk that evening under the trees of the orchard, smoking his after-supper cigar, "is the renowned Miss Georgiana Ellery, the beautiful, the accomplished! Sentimental," he pronounced, "from the crown of her head to the soles of her shoes! And intellectual! It would take a pretty brave man to go in for her! Well," he concluded, bending back his head and blowing out puffs of smoke, "she's a fair type of what the woman's college turns out nowadays. But by Jupiter! A more stunningly beautiful girl I never saw!"

In spite, however, of this conclusion, he patted himself on the head for his eleverness in having devised so excellent a scheme for the preservation of his liberty. What a boredom it spared him!

There was one phase of his escapade which was not so pleasant to contemplate—the discovery of his deception when he should be obliged to meet these two young ladies in his true character, upon his return to college in the fall.

His stroll had brought him to the fence which separated the orchard from the lane and suddenly he stopped short and took his cigar from his mouth. There, a few feet away, leaning against the fence, stood Eunice. In the deepening twilight he had not seen her until nearly at her side.

Her relaxed attitude betrayed the weariness of her young body at the end of the day's toil and the droop of her head against her hand suggested the

pensiveness of her mind.

He felt glad that he had come upon her, he was so curious to know how his disguise affected her. She had actually been surprised into a faint smile of amusement at the dinner table!—it had fairly startled him.

In the lane outside the fence, four little boys were playing, children from neighbouring farmlabourers' cottages, and Eunice was watching them idly.

The dialogue of the little cubs was diverting, so he, too, rested against the fence and listened to them. He thought she must surely have heard his approach, but she did not stir.

"I used to be a towner-I lived at Lebanon,"

one boy was boasting.

"Aw," scorned the other, "I lived furder'n that—I used to live out West yet!"

"Aw, why you couldn't!" the first gave him the lie without ceremony. "The Indians would kill you if you lived out West!"

"I did too! Say, Reddy, didn't I used to live

out West?"

"Yes, you did," Reddy championed him.

"But there's five hundred and fifty Indians out West!" exclaimed the first boy statistically. "A body couldn't live out there!"

"Aw!" sneered Reddy, "come off! You're thick! A body can't hardly learn you nothin'! The Indians ain't wild no more—they're tamed now!"

The dispute ended in a fist-fight which led the combatants further down the road and out of ear-shot.

Kinross took his cigar from his mouth and spoke to Eunice across the space between them.

"Boys are queer animals, aren't they?"

She did not turn to look at him. For an instnat she did not answer. Then, low and soft, her voice fell upon the still evening.

"' Queer animals'? But they are embryo men!"
His cigar almost fell from his hand. He stared
at her averted profile in stupid astonishment.

"Are we a pair of cynics?" he at last found his voice to remark.

But the words were not uttered before he realised that the space where she had stood was empty. She had turned and fled like a frightened

bird. He stared after her retreating figure, his sense of the mystery which hung about her affect-

ing him strangely.

"Was that the girl Eunice to whom I spoke and who answered me in such wise? 'They are embryo men!' Embryo. A girl who asks me who this Andrew Carnegie is anyway!"

He turned back to lean upon the fence again, put his cigar to his lips, and meditatively blew a long cloud of smoke into the air.

"By gosh!"

It expressed, as no other comment could have done, the state of his mind.

FEW days later, Dr. Kinross, dressed in his overalls and lying on his back in the woods behind a pile of logs, found himself in the enforced position of eavesdropper and felt it exceedingly awkward. A few feet away, beneath his own favourite shade tree, sat Miss Georgiana Ellery and Miss Daisy Parks. He had not counted upon their penetrating to this resort to which he came daily with his books. His telltale volume and compromising leisure, in the middle of the afternoon, from the farm work in which he was supposed to be engaged made it imperative, at the warning signal of their voices, that he should scramble out of sight behind a near-by pile of logs. He had barely had time to conceal himself when they had come into view and presumptuously proceeded to settle themselves for the afternoon in the comfortable spot which their coming forced him to abandon, thus making it impossible for him to move an inch without discovery and placing him in the discreditable position of being obliged to hear everything that was said.

"Have you noticed, Daisy," he heard Georgiana's attractive voice asking, almost as soon as they

were seated, "anything about that farm-hand, Peter, which has impressed you as singular?"

"He isn't as woozy-looking as 'Pop' and Abe,"

Daisy promptly answered.

"Daisy! How can you, in the very heart of the

country, use that detestable city slang?"

"Well, Georgie," Daisy returned plaintively, "I'm sure I never wanted to go to college. You and uncle made me!"

"Did college do nothing for you but give you

a vocabulary of slang?"

"But, Georgie, Pete isn't as woozy-looking—I mean," she hastily corrected herself, "he's rather good looking and—as there's nothing else doing out here, I'm thinking of flirting with Pete, if you won't kick—object, I should say."

"Why Pete? Why not Abe?" Georgiana in-

quired tolerantly.

"Abe's too woozy—oh! I don't want to jar you, Georgiana—forgive me. Of course I feel, too, how perfectly dear and sweet it is out here with so much Nature around and—everything—but I just thought I'd mention, since there's nothing doing, just to keep up my courage a little, you know, I'd encourage Pete to fall in love with me. Do you know," she said thoughtfully, "I shouldn't wonder if Pete would be quite good-looking if he were sported-up."

"He has impressed you," affirmed Georgiana,

"because there is something singular about him. I feel it too. For instance, the way the family treats him. With an air of uncertainty—I can't explain just what it is—but they don't behave towards him as one would expect to see a hired farm-hand treated. And his face—have you noticed? It is usually so remarkably heavy and unintelligent—but now and then when I unexpectedly catch his eye, I find him gazing at me with an expression so keen and penetrating that I am startled—and then the moment he finds me looking at him, he has a relapse—falls back into that hopeless imbecility! It's very extraordinary."

"Dear me!" said Daisy, surprised, "I had not supposed you would think him worth while, Geor-

giana."

"Every one is worth while, Daisy, when you get at his real self. As for Peter, he certainly does have intervals when his mind seems to awaken. He isn't quite so crude as the rest of the family either. I dropped a hat-pin this morning and he fairly sprang across the room to pick it up for me. I was so surprised."

"This," thought Kinross behind the logs, "is profitable. Memorandum—no more gallantry."

He wondered, with consternation, whether even his disguise were going to fail him.

"While he does speak in the provincial dialect," continued Georgiana with careful discrimination,

"his accent and his voice are not so harsh as those of the other people here. And he doesn't have that queer Pennsylvania Dutch inflection. When the others speak I never can tell whether they are asking something or telling something. But you can distinguish when Pete speaks."

"As a success," mused Kinross, "I'm a failure!

Next thing, they'll surmise who I am."

"By the way," Georgiana changed the subject with a disregard for the sequence of ideas that Kinross would have thought not possible to one so philosophical; "how about your letter this morning from Belle Dasher? Aren't you going to read it to me?"

"I'm afraid," Daisy answered doubtfully, "it will jar you, Georgiana, it's so sporty."

"Read it," Georgiana urged.

"Then don't blame me," Daisy warned. "You know what a corker Belle is!"

A rustle of stiff paper suggested to Kinross the

opening of the letter referred to.

"'I foresee the fate of Georgiana,' Daisy glibly read, 'when she comes home in the fall and meets our swell new prof., Dr. Peter Kinross. That chaste Diana cannot fail to lose her heart to this Endymion if for no other reason than that the man won't notice her. He won't take girls seriously. (Georgiana will see that he takes her seriously, won't she?) He seems to think that girls belong

only to the holiday side of life and he hasn't time for holidays. I'm crazy to have him meet Georgiana with her serious views. He'll learn, then, that some girls can't be taken lightly, I might say mockingly (for he is the most sarcastic pig I ever saw, I can't abide him). I am sure Georgiana will surprise and impress him.'—— Oh!" Daisy broke off gleefully, "jilt him, Georgiana, won't you?"

"Do you know, Daisy," Georgiana returned earnestly, "a man like that—who is repelled by the lack of earnestness in the average girl whom one meets socially—"

("Am I that kind of chump?" Kinross wondered.)

"——such a man," Georgiana continued thoughtfully, "I might be able to welcome on my own line of march, to clasp hands with him, to find a oneness——"

("Thank God I thought of these overalls," Kinross told himself fervently.)

"One can't trust Belle Dasher's opinion of a man, though," Daisy inserted. "She's such a manhater. She hates men so, I wonder she even has a man for a brother-in-law! She says she thinks men, as a sex, are very much overrated."

Georgiana had no reply to make to these inane comments and for a while there was silence between them, the only sound coming to Kinross' ears being the rattle of paper indicating the turning of the pages of books. This continued so long that he began to grow restive. If he moved hand or foot they would hear and discover him. Were they going to sit there and read for the rest of the afternoon? Already he was becoming cramped from being in one position so long. But how get out of his predicament? To make his presence known and reveal the fact that he had heard their discussion of himself, that is, of Pete the farmhand, would be embarrassing—to them of course; he himself could bear up under it complacently enough.

"Something's got to be done!" he thought, feeling an intolerable necessity for stretching his legs.

The two young ladies, engrossed in their reading, were suddenly startled by the sound of a long-drawn yawn, coming apparently out of space.

"What was that?" cried Daisy.

"A tramp?" Georgiana whispered back with enforced calm; she never allowed externals to disturb her inward serenity, for it was possible for the soul to live on a plane above all outward things.

"Where?" demanded Daisy in a tragic voice.

"I don't know," said Georgiana.

Another prolonged yawn, and the sound of rustling leaves very near.

"Behind those logs?" suggested Daisy fearfully.

"Let us go away," said Georgiana, speaking, it must be admitted, nervously.

"But in what direction shall we go? I'm not sure he's behind those logs."

"Look and see," begged Georgiana.

"It's up to you," declared Daisy with unexpected rebellion. "I'm afraid; I admit it!"

Georgiana cautiously rose and took a few steps to the logs. Dr. Kinross stretched his arms above his head and yawned ostentatiously.

"Oh!" exclaimed Georgiana. "It's Peter!"

"My gracious!" exclaimed Daisy's astonished voice. She sprang to Georgiana's side as Peter sat up.

"I was a-sleepin'-still," he said blinking and

yawning.

"Did you hear what we were saying?" demanded Daisy. "And why are you out here, Peter? Why aren't you working with Mr. Morningstar and Abe?"

"I got it so bad in my head, I ast the boss to leave me have off this after. I had the headache, now, something wonderful. But," he added, rising, "I slep' it off. I'm some better."

He noticed that Georgiana's eyes were upon the book he held.

"I'm goin' home now," he announced, taking a step away and checking himself in the act of lifting his hand to his old straw farm-hat. "It is getting a little late, we will go too," said Georgiana; and Daisy followed her as she moved around the logs to the path where Peter stood.

"I got to hurry," said Peter, edging off. "Yous

couldn't walk so fast."

"It won't be good for your headache to hurry, Peter," admonished Daisy, keeping at his side. "What is the book you have?"

Peter gave himself up to the inevitable and

walked with them down the hill.

"This here?" he said, holding up a volume labelled, Vedanta Philosophy—Raja Yoga—and Other Lectures by Swami Vivekananda.

"Gracious!" exclaimed Daisy, "wouldn't that

rattle your slats? What is it?"

"I'll never tell yous. Want to read it?"

"I don't wonder you want to get rid of it. But don't offer it to me! Gracious, what do you take me for, Peter? Miss Ellery might like it."

"Where did you get it, Peter?" Georgiana

asked, looking astonished.

"Och," he answered disparagingly, "I borrowed the loan of it off Teacher, but there's

too many big words in it."

He found that his disguise was giving him an assurance which he had never before felt in the presence of a girl. To be walking and talking with two young ladies without his customary sense of constraint was indeed a novel experience—and withal, a highly agreeable one.

"Teacher?" questioned Georgiana. "The district school teacher? But it is vacation now."

"She boarded at our place and let 'em there over the summer," said Peter, developing a talent for fiction which, if properly utilised, he felt might make his fame.

"How much of it have you read?" asked Georgiana, looking at him kindly.

"Och, I went to sleep the first couple pages

a'ready."

"That may be because of your headache," she said encouragingly. She longed to discover a dia-

mond in the rough in Peter.

"I will lend you this," said Daisy patronisingly, holding up the book she carried. "My uncle thought it would be good mental discipline for me to read it, but—well, I haven't finished it, but no matter. Keep it as long as you like, Peter, I won't be selfish."

Peter received the book and read the title laboriously, like a small boy spelling out his words: Some Facts about the Great Back-Boned Family. What fur a family's that?" he asked.

"Don't ask me. Read it for yourself."

He handed it back to her. "Gimme an interestin' story and I'll read it."

"Peter," Daisy gravely admonished him, "have

you no ambition to improve your mind?"

"I know enough to get along. What's the use of botherin' your mind with more'n that?"

Daisy sighed with undisguised sympathy.

"I can understand, Peter," said Georgiana thoughtfully, "your preference for fiction rather than for a statistical, scientific work like that. No doubt you feel, without fully comprehending it, the more inward significance of fancies that embody spiritual truths, than of isolated hard facts about the Back-Boned Family, which lead nowhere."

"Now," mused Kinross, "that wouldn't be so bad, if she weren't talking to a farm-hand. If only she didn't give herself over so entirely to her little pose of being superior," he thought ruefully, "she might be very attractive—she's so tremendously good-looking. I wonder what she would be like if she dropped it."

"Pete," said Daisy, "one of these days I want you to hire Abe's horse and buggy from him and take me for a drive and show me the country, will you? Of course I'll pay the price. Abe's so tight across the chest, he'd never give it to us for

nothing."

"Oh, Daisy!" gently protested Georgiana, "what an expression! Instead of trying to give these people higher standards, you would debase their taste with your low—yes, low—slang."

"Economical," Daisy corrected herself. "Abe's so economical, I mean. Will you take me driving,

Pete?" she asked ingratiatingly.

Instead of looking gratified as she expected him to do, Peter appeared rather daunted at the prospect.

"Oh, Pete," Daisy reassured him, "you needn't mind me. Now if it were Miss Ellery that asked

you, you might be scared white!"

"You see," Pete explained apologetically, "us we're so common out here towards what yous are—no wonder if a body felt funny takin' one of yous buggy-ridin'. Us we don't know nothin' but to sleep, and feed our faces."

"If you will make yourself worthy of better things, Peter, they will come to you," said Georgiana earnestly. "All the good things of the Uni-

verse come to him who is ready for them."

"Good things? What, now, would you call good things?" he asked curiously.

"Love, for instance," said Georgiana with up-

lifted countenance.

"Umph!" he grunted. "I never thought so much of this here love, like some thinks. I always held that Adam would of been better off if he'd kep' his rib."

"Why, Peter," cried Daisy, "I never would

have suspected you of having such views!"

They had reached the farm and at this moment they encountered the girl Eunice carrying two heavy pails of milk from the barn towards the spring-house. Abe, the farmer's son, walked at her side, apparently pursuing her with some request which she refused him, for her face was troubled and she hurried a step ahead of him.

Almost before he knew what he was doing, Kinross was at the girl's side relieving her of both her pails. She coloured with confusion before a gallantry to which she was unaccustomed, while Abe scowled resentfully and skulked off in another direction.

"Did you see that?" asked Georgiana as she and Daisy went into the kitchen; "it would never occur to *Abe* to carry those heavy pails for that slender-looking girl. I believe there is a latent fineness in this Peter—"

"It's awfully latent, dear," said Daisy with unaccustomed disagreement. "Don't you think so?"

"I believe that he has fine, though undeveloped, perceptions or intuitions," affirmed Georgiana, "which, with a little encouragement, may reveal him to himself."

VII

NCE again just as the dusk was gathering, Eunice lingered by the fence near the spring-house. The girl's heart was on fire this evening and she felt that she would stifle or shriek if she went into the house and shut herself within those dreary white-washed walls. Here in the open she might breathe deep. To-day her pent-up feelings had reached the high-water mark—and to-night they must have outlet or she must suffocate!

What was the meaning, she was asking herself in bewilderment, of this mingled ecstasy and woe which were now her daily portion—when of old, (so long ago it seemed, though in reality it was only three weeks ago that he—the man from the city—had come among them) her soul had been cold, dormant, incapable of feeling aught of pain or pleasure. And now—to the tips of her fingers was she tingling with life, with burning emotions which stifled and pained, yet gave her the first taste of joy she had ever known. For the first time in her memory, the heavy loneliness in which she had always lived seemed lifted. Something in her which had always been starved was fed. It had become

worth while to rise up in the morning and go through with her tasks. The days palpitated, now, and throbbed—they were no longer the dull dead drag they had been. There was always the possibility of a word or act of kindness from him. Never before in her life had she known kindness. But he had been kind to her—he had tried to shield her from her foster-father's anger and had then hidden the newspaper for her; he had helped her when he saw her burdened with her heavy buckets of milk; he had several times spoken to her with a friendly interest.

These episodes, entirely trifling in themselves, appeared large and luminous to this girl accustomed only to slights. Her imagination, fired by his utter difference from any one she had ever before seen, made of him a creature whose least word or act were weighted with significance. Her absorbing and passionate interest in everything about him—his voice, his accent (so strange to her ears); the movements of his white hands (never had she seen such hands), the way he sat or walked or stood or looked—all that he did or uttered, was fascinating, intoxicating. And to-day, her feelings had suddenly reached a climax of intensity which had amazed herself. It had come upon her when she had seen him return from his afternoon outing in company with the two young ladies—young ladies of his kind of people—of education, beauty, worldly knowledge, money, freedom from drudgery,—everything which made a woman appear attractive, everything which she lacked. Apparently he had been spending the afternoon with them, theirs was the privilege of looking upon him for hours together, of hearing the sound of his voice, of drinking in his thoughts about things (how hungry her own mind was to read all his thoughts and feelings!)—and oh, bitterness! they had all three come upon her when, weary and soiled and overladen, she was awkwardly lugging her heavy buckets across the garden. She had fancied his snowy hands had shrunk from touching her soiled ones as he took the buckets from her. The overwhelming sense of her own inferiority in the face of the contrast between herself and the boarders. had been followed by a passion of inward rebellion that had left her physically exhausted. It had not vet spent itself as just now she lingered in the dusk by the spring-house fence. Her heart burned within her with a feeling that she did not understand; for the passion of jealousy was to her as unknown as the passion of love. Her own blinding, consuming emotions were appalling to herself in their utter strangeness and newness.

He had said that he wished to assume a farmhand's disguise because he didn't want to associate with the new guests—why, then, was he spending whole afternoons with them? Was he repenting him of his whim? And they—even though they thought him a mere farm-hand—could not fail to find happiness in being with him, for farm-hand or gentleman, he was himself.

The young ladies appeared to her very stupid not to recognise that he was not a farm-hand. To be sure, they probably did not know many farm-hands and so did not see how impossible it was. But they had only to compare him with Abe and his father to see the absurdity of it.

This evening, for the first time since he had come to the farm, she fell to wondering in a vague indefinite way, what was his mental image of herself whom he saw only at her drudgery, treated slightingly by every one, always looking hideous in her working clothes, shy before him even to cowardice. That day he had found her with the newspaper he had evidently supposed that her starting and turning white had been caused by her fear of being caught in the act of disobeying her fosterfather. She had read his look of half-contemptuous pity clearly enough and it had served to increase her agony of embarrassment before him. Then, his poorly concealed mockery at her not knowing about that great man, Andrew Carnegie-how that had mortified her! And now to heighten the effect of her own uncomeliness, here were these welldressed, well-looking, well-educated and worldlywise young ladies daily before his eyes. Oh! if only she could creep into a corner and remain unseen while still not losing the bliss of seeing him! But then, there was the ecstasy of having him occasionally speak to her. The few dozen words he had spoken to her in the time he had been with them were graven deep in her heart. Why should he seek to talk to her, now and then, if he utterly despised her?—he who at first had meant to avoid even those two girls from the town by assuming a farm-hand's garb. He never talked to Ollie; why did he speak to her? True, their few encounters had been quite accidental, he had not sought her out. Perhaps he took the trouble to speak kindly to her because he was sorry for one whom every one else half despised—

Her thoughts were interrupted by the sound of approaching footsteps and voices. The two young ladies were coming towards her across the grassplot.

"Eunice!" cried Daisy when still a few yards distant, "do you know where Pete is? I want to hire him to take us for a drive."

Eunice's heart beat thick in her breast. To see these pretty girls, their fair bodies daintily clad, their white hands bearing no ugly marks of rough work, their care-free spirits bright with happiness,—to look on and see them drive off into the summer twilight with him—she could not bear that this evening!

"Where is he?" repeated Daisy. "I'm going to find him if I have to search all over the farm—it's such a dandy evening for a drive!"

"Did you look up in the north corn-field?"

Eunice asked, not glancing up.

"Way up in that north corn-field!" cried Daisy in consternation.

"You are sure he is there, Eunice?" asked Georgiana.

"It would be well for you to look there," the

girl steadily replied.

"What proof can you offer that he's there, Eunice?" demanded Daisy. "I don't want to chase up there for nothing."

"If you have looked every place else, that's the

only place he can be."

"That seems reasonable," Daisy granted. "Is he mowing corn up there to-night?"

"No," Eunice was able to answer truthfully.

"Then what is he doing?"

"He may possibly be—looking to see how the corn is coming on—but," she hastily added, "I can't prove it."

"Well," sighed Daisy, "come on, Georgie—we'll have to skate if we're going to get a drive to-

night."

They went away, and Eunice was left alone to face her own chaotic thoughts. She leaned her elbows on the fence and pressed her palms against her burning cheeks to cool them. The sunset, palpitating and rich with colour, seemed to her, as she gazed out over the fields to the crimson horizon, to mirror her own warm passionate heart.

She had lied to these young ladies! Not in actual words. But the impression she had given was false. Why had she done it? What good could it do her? And suppose he knew! A wave of shame enveloped her. The hands supporting her cheeks covered her eyes as though to shut out from her sight the disgraceful self she beheld. Could she ever look at him again after this?

"What led you to think I was up in the north corn-field?"

Out of the stillness and dimness of the evening a voice close beside her asked the question—his voice.

She did not uncover her eyes, she did not move. He was there beside her! He had overheard her telling those girls to look for him in that impossible north corn-field, a quarter of a mile away! He had been standing, no doubt, just within the springhouse and had heard her utter those lies. He had surely recognised that they were lies, though her spoken words had not been literally untrue.

"I didn't tell them you were there," she faintly answered.

"Why, you sent them up there to find me, didn't you?" he asked, his tone puzzled.

"Yes," she confessed like a guilty child.

"Well, didn't you think I was there?" She shook her head.

"You didn't? Then why, in thunder, did you make them think I was?"

"Because—that's where I knew you wouldn't be." The words seemed dragged from her against her will.

He appeared to puzzle over it a bit. What he really was thinking, was that perhaps he had now stumbled upon the solution of the mystery of this maiden. To offer as an explanation of her having sent those girls to look for him in the north cornfield that she knew that's where he wouldn't be—evidently she was not quite right in her mind.

But another idea occurred to him.

"Ah!" he said, "you wanted to give them a false scent—knowing that I prefer to keep to myself?"

It was a beautiful explanation. For a moment she half believed that was why she had sent them to the north corn-field—to protect him from their unwelcome society. Anyway it was infinitely comforting to have him think so, instead of knowing her real reason. What was her real reason? She could not have defined it even to herself.

He seemed waiting to hear her confirm or deny his surmise. But she did not speak.

"It was very kind of you," he presently added, to want to oblige me."

Her face burned hotter. She had an impulse to turn to him and undeceive him—to tell him the disgraceful truth. But what was the truth? Why had she wished to keep him away from the two girls?

It was her entire ignorance of life that made it so impossible for her to understand her own quite

primitive emotions.

"It was clever of you, too," he chuckled. "The north corn-field! I'd be just as likely to be at the North Pole, wouldn't I?"

Kinross was, in fact, gratuitously assuming that she had wished to return his favour to her in having averted her foster father's wrath upon finding her

with the forbidden newspaper.

Eunice was conscious of the fact that while in her heart she felt ashamed of what she had done, she was throbbing with joy at having done it. For was he not here alone with her in the summer evening? She exulted madly in her guilt.

"I would never have dreamed you capable, little Eunice, of such sublety," he went on; and she could feel the amusement in his voice. "To think of those two poor girls scouring that corn-field in search of me! And you look so harmless!"

He gave a short laugh as he put his pipe to his

lips.

Was he really so glad, she wondered, at having escaped them? The thought was followed by an apprehension which clouded her joy of the moment. If he was so fond of being alone, her own presence here must annoy him. But he had come to her, she had not intruded upon him.

"I must go indoors now," she suddenly said, her low sweet voice scarcely above a whisper, as she drew back from the fence.

"Must you? What for?" he asked, and her hungry heart felt or imagined a note of regret in his tone.

"I don't have to—if—if it doesn't annoy you for me to be here."

Again to Kinross' ear that something in her speech so unlike that of the rest of the family! So arrested was he by it that for an instant he did not answer her question. His silence was answer enough for her and again she quickly stepped away from the fence.

"No," he abruptly stopped her, "you don't annoy me."

He was struck with the absurdity of his telling a young woman that her society did not annoy him. He saw, in the dimness, how her face lighted up at his words, and a quick compassion stirred him.

"Poor lonely child!" he thought.

But in the same instant he realised that her sudden radiance was clouded over by her habitual pensiveness.

"I'm not important enough to," came her response in a low, sorrowful voice. "Am I?"

He turned and looked at her. "Now, Eunice," he asked, after an instant's weighing of it, "just what do you mean by that?"

"A kitten or a poodle would annoy you more than I. So you don't feel obliged to dodge about to be rid of me as you do of—others—who are more important."

Hello! She had found her voice, she was become articulate! Was that a note of bitterness he caught in her words?

"I will go indoors now," she repeated with a melancholy dignity, as again she drew back from the fence.

He had an impulse to urge her to stay. There was an undefined impression in his mind that he wanted to question her about herself. But both the impulse and the impression were too vague to urge to prompt action—and before he could clarify them she was gone.

Eunice, meantime, as she sped across the orchard, was already regretting passionately that she had left him. If she did not annoy him, was not that enough for her to expect? Why had she not remained to drink in at least the happiness of being near him?—and what did it matter if to him her existence was as that of a fly?

"He was speaking to me—to me—and I came away!"

She stopped short in her quick walk and half

turned to go back. Her eyes fell upon two figures just coming into the orchard and walking toward the spring-house. They were the young ladies and they had spied "Pete," where he still stood by the fence. Daisy's rippling, shallow laughter floated to her on the quiet evening air. She stood still and watched. Would Dr. Kinross go away when he heard them coming? Yes, he was moving off, though escape was not very easy. She heard Daisy call out to him to stop him. She saw him hesitate, then turn back and wait. Daisy ran up to him and caught hold of his shirt sleeve. Georgiana followed with slow, stately grace. Presently the three of them went across the orchard, together, towards the lane that led to "the hill." Were they going to climb the hill together? The sunset view from there was very fine. It was the one spot in all the region that was dear to her, because here, in solitude, she had known some hours of peace and even of happiness, and the place had come to seem to her her very own. And now those girls were going there with him-to her hill.

She shrank back into the shadow of some trees as they came near enough to see her.

"It's a good deal of a climb," she heard Dr. Kinross say in a tone of warning.

"I'm game!" Daisy declared; and then they moved out of her hearing.

She watched them as they emerged into the road

and went up the lane—until they disappeared around a bend at the foot of the hill.

Her bosom rose and fell in a long deep breath as at last she turned away and slowly, with her head wearily drooping, walked through the garden to the kitchen porch and went into the house. You know that. Even if I wanted to."
"Yes," said Abe bitterly. "Even if you wanted! That's the way you put it, ain't? And you don't want. If you'd make your mind up, Eunice, that you wanted to go, don't you know that Mom she wouldn't have the dare to stop you?—because you're got your age and if Mom tries to boss you, you have the right to up and tell her, 'I don't have to.' It's time you knowed that oncet!"

Eunice looked at her foster-brother and would-be lover with sudden attention. They were in the spring-house, he standing in the door-way and barring her exit, and she, with her daily burden of butter, cheese and milk for the dinner-table, waiting anxiously to be allowed to pass.

"Have I the right, Abe, to follow my own will?" she asked with a repressed eagerness, which Abe instantly interpreted as referring to his invitation to her to go with him next day to the circus in town. "I didn't know that, Abe!"

"You're your own boss when you're eighteen a'ready."

"But your mother and father support me," she

reasoned, repeating the lesson which had been ground into her ever since she could remember anything, "and so have a right to control me, haven't they?"

There was an anxious wistfulness in her eyes which thrilled her baffled and discouraged suitor with hope.

"Don't you earn your keep—and a good bit over, where [which] you don't get? If they had a hired girl do half what you do, still, they'd have to give her two a week."

"But then, I am working for them now to pay for the years they supported me when I was too little to work."

"Och, Eunice, you was always wonderful dumm! There ain't no time since you was five years old a'ready that you ain't earnt all it cost to keep you. And them couple years before that when you was too little—well," he said mysteriously, "I could tell you somepin if I wanted—somepin where would make you say to Mom and Pop pretty quick, 'I don't have to.' They had ought to be payin' you wages. It ain't right they don't."

"Tell me what you mean about those two years of my childhood."

Abe hesitated. "Pop would jaw me somepin turrible if I tole you. You just wait. Some time I'll tell you mebbe. But now," he urged, "if you're got any spunk, you up and tell 'em you're

goin' along with me to the circus in! Ain't you will, Eunice? Och, go on!"

He attempted a clumsy caress, but she drew

back. Abe scowled angrily.

"Look at here, Eunice! You might be glad I wanted to keep comp'ny with you!"

"Why?" she asked with a childlike wonder, as

though the proposition were a curious one.

"Ain't I goin' to be well-fixed till Pop's deceased a'ready?" he demanded. "And look at the good times you could have off of me, buggyridin' Sundays and goin' to circuses and all. When does a girl ever get any fun without a gen'man friend to run with her? And it ain't everybody fixed like me would want to keep comp'ny with you neither—with Pop and Mom so down on my runnin' with a girl where won't have no aussteuer. You won't bring me nothin'," he said ruefully. "Nothin' but my Pop's and Mom's spite! Yes, you might be glad anyhow I want you!"

Eunice regarded him thoughtfully, but made no

answer.

"Can't you see it that there way?" he persisted.

"But I could not let any man sacrifice so much

for me, even if I did want to marry him."

"There you go agin!" he exclaimed indignantly. "Even if you did want, you say! I can't see why you don't want. Say!" he said, his dis-



Look at here, Eunice! You might be glad I wanted to keep comp'ny with you!



couraged tone changing to hopeful, "is it mebbe because you don't like to get Pop and Mom down on me? But," he reasoned, "you see, all I'd be givin' up fur you, don't weigh agin what I'd be gettin'. And you see, I'd reason with Pop and Mom like this—I'd say, 'Eunice she ain't been raised to go much or spend any at the cloes like some and she's used to hard work and in the end she'd mebbe save me more'n if I married another one where had money, but where wasn't contented not to be spendin' and goin'.' I've spoke them argyments to myself, still, a'ready, when I thought of your not bringin' me any aussteuer—and them same reasonings would weigh with Pop and Mom, Eunice," he urged coaxingly.

"I do not doubt it, Abe."

"Then you'll go with—to the circus?" he pleaded. "Ain't?"

" No."

"I'll take your part agin Pop and Mom. Ain't you got any spunk? Or don't you like circuses—or what?"

"I'm not afraid of your mother and father, though your mother's loud complainings often weary me—when I listen to them. But, Abe, I can't let you spend money taking me pleasure-seeking when I don't intend to marry you."

According to the Pennsylvania Dutch social standards, such a course on the part of a girl would

have been perfidious, inasmuch as acceptance of an invitation to go with one's "gent'man friend" to a circus was tantamount to accepting a proposal of marriage.

"I'd like to know," said Abe sullenly, "how

you expec' to do any better."

"Would you, Abe? I'll tell you," she said gently. "I'd do better by lying down across the railroad tracks and letting the cars run over me."

She made another quick move to pass him, for Mrs. Morningstar's shrill tones were shrieking angry commands to the girl to stop dawdling there with her Abe and come in with them "wittles."

For any least attention paid to her by the son of her foster-parents, Eunice was always made to suffer, it being assumed, gratuitously, that the penniless girl, and not the prospectively rich youth, did the love-making.

But Abe was so spellbound with amazement at such startling speech from the usually meek and submissive girl that he did not hear, or at least did not heed, his mother's voice. As Eunice forced her way past him, the close contact of her body sent the fire through his veins and he seized her about the waist and pressed his lips to her cheek—just as his mother, in a rage, strode to the spring-house door and as Dr. Kinross, with his books concealed in an old basket, was surreptitiously returning by a back way from his morning's outing.

"You little hussy!" cried Mrs. Morningstar. "Go in and tend to the dinner and leave our Abe be!"

"You leave me be, Mom," retorted Abe, looking shamefaced. But his mother, not stopping to discuss the matter with him, walked after Eunice into the house, her angry upbraidings following the girl into the kitchen.

"Now, what a spiritless creature the damsel is not to turn on that woman and resent her abuse!" Dr. Kinross thought with mingled compassion and impatience, as he slowly followed them up the path to the house.

Meantime, Abe, still tingling from the joy of his stolen embrace, was hastily examining something that he had found in the spring-house which had excited his jealous suspicion. While he had been waiting for Eunice to come to the spring, he had accidentally discovered, sticking under the door-sill, an envelope addressed to Miss Eunice Morningstar. Now judging from his own feelings towards the girl, he did not see how any man's eyes could rest upon her and not desire her, and he had therefore leaped to the instant conclusion that this was a love-letter to Eunice from "that dude towner," as he privately characterised Kinross.

A rage of hot jealousy had swept over him and he had been about to tear the envelope into bits, when the sudden appearance of Eunice in the doorway had caused him quickly to conceal it in his pocket, to be examined or destroyed later.

So, while his mother was driving the girl into the house with her reproaches, he, lingering in the spring-house, was tearing open, with hands that shook, the letter addressed to another.

His jaw dropped in amazement as he saw the name subscribed at the end of the sheet. *Henny Mucklehenny*. His sister Ollie's beau! What could he be writing to Eunice for? Did he want to be a bigamist? With a curiosity equal to his jealousy, Abe read the brief epistle.

"DEAR EUNICE:

"There's a misunderstanding. I don't mean Ollie, I mean you. But when I begun to come Sundays, Ollie she took it for herself. But it ain't her. It's you. It don't come easy to explain her I don't mean her. She'd take it some hard, I can see it at her how she favers me a good bit, me bein' so well-fixed and could be a good purvider. I wanted to keep company with you ever since I seen you on church Children's Day, six weeks back already. Well, that Sunday you was on church once, ain't? When you come in church, some one says to me, that's Eunice Morningstar. I says to myself, of course not out loud, I know it is and she looks so pretty, I believe I love her. Anyhow you can write to me and tell me about it. I praid one night to

find out if you was the right one. I gave a quarter in the collection when you was in church. God loves a chearful givver. Well, I haf to stop now. You will write to me now, ain't? If I spell diffrunt, I'm spelling simplified.

"Cordially your lover,
"HENNY MUCKLEHENNY."

A look of cunning settled about Abe's mouth as he finished his surreptitious reading. It was no slight shock to discover that he had so strong a rival as Hen Mucklehenny. Nevertheless he felt quite equal to coping with him.

Without an instant's hesitation, he tore the sheet and the envelope into tiny bits. "She won't never see that! And when he comes Sunday and she ain't round, he'll think she's discouragin' him and he'll lose heart. And then mebbe he'll take to Ollie fur all, if he keeps on comin' and settin' up with her, because he ain't got cheek enough to tell her it ain't her he means."

A few moments later, Kinross, at the ringing of the dinner-bell, ostentatiously joined the other men at the pump to wash his face and hands and comb his hair before coming to the table. This performance was part of his disguise as a farm-hand, but to-day it defeated its own ends, for the two young ladies, coming into the kitchen from the front porch where they had spent the morning in hammocks and rockers, made note of the fact that when Pete took his turn at the kitchen pump, he did not use the family towel on the roller, but carried his own towel on his arm and combed his hair with his own pocket comb instead of using the family comb which always lay on the window ledge, convenient for the use of every one.

"Now hurry on here, Eunice," prompted Mrs. Morningstar, bustling to and from the stove in the outer kitchen to the dinner table, "and make things on the table quick. Och," she threw a remark to the young ladies who waited on the settee, "till we're done the breakfast cooking, it's time fur dinner a'ready. And it's so hard to know what to cook all, too, fur your towners. And to-day it was everything now scarce. The lard was all and the pies was run out and the bread stale. And here this morning I gev the Doc, fur his breakfast, fat cakes with coffee over and he saved, now that he certainly don't want. So he eat balony, where I bought off of Jake Eckstein's meat-car. That there balony I don't like—they say Take he puts most anything in it! But Doc he eat it."

"Doc?" reepated Daisy inquiringly. "But he's not a 'towner."

"Och," said Mrs. Morningstar in confusion. "I don't mean to say he's just a towner. But he's near as sneaky about his wittles as if he was one."

Daisy seized her note-book. "'Sneaky'? Does that mean choicy? How perfectly killing!"

"Eunice!" Mrs. Morningstar again shrieked, "fetch them pie out of the oven! Och," she volubly continued to her boarders. "I couldn't get that donkey of a new stove to work to-day and them pie ain't good-baked all. I have only twelve fur over Sunday, too, and that ain't enough for the size of pie we eat."

"I'm sorry you find it so troublesome to cater for us, Mrs. Morningstar," said Georgiana. "But take comfort—there are some essentials of diet that one can never find so good in town as on a farm. Butter, for instance,"

"Yes, well, but," Mrs. Morningstar shook her head doubtfully, "the butter ain't good on the farms all. Not like ourn. Eunice!" she called shrilly to the outer kitchen, "make over the coffee now and put an extry spoonful yet in and use the big pot—the little one is yet so soon full. Yous towners," she explained to the young ladies, "likes your coffee so strong that way. Well, I like it when it tastes good, too—coffee—especially by the such cold winter weather. But," shaking her head, "not so strong like yous take it. Yes, it makes me a difference too, if my wittles don't suit me. Now here one day," she related as she placed a white-crusted pie on either end of the table, "we had a boarder here fur a week, from out West, and she sayed how

they fried their sauerkraut. Well, I says, that would be a big surprise to me, to eat fried sauerkraut yet! Eunice!" she again called, "take watch oncet when the meat car comes; Doc—Pete—he says he'd now like steak oncet."

"You are very indulgent to your farm-hand," remarked Georgiana, as Peter at that moment walked into the room and sat down in a huge painted rocking-chair directly in front of the

settee.

"Och, Doc," warned Mrs. Morningstar, "that chair'll fall together if you set on it before Mister makes it new rockers at."

Pete removed himself to the edge of the settee beside Miss Ellery, who, with apparent willingness, made room for him by drawing away the skirt of her remarkably pretty pink summer gown. Kinross liked her taste in dress; her costumes were simple to the point of distinction and, he thought, exactly suited her style of beauty.

"I guess yous think such a old chair would as soon be throwed on the wood-pile," said Mrs. Morningstar. "But I'm used to it some thirty years and I'd have homesick fur it if it went."

"By the way, Mrs. Morningstar," said Daisy plaintively, "would you mind having the porch chairs moved to the side of the house which doesn't overlook the cemetery? We're here for our health."

Mrs. Morningstar looked at her in surprise.

"But I don't think," she said reassuringly, "any of 'em would come over."

The entrance of Ollie at the kitchen door carrying a basket of apples checked Daisy's answer.

"Ollie," her mother turned to her complainingly, "where was you at? Come, hurry and help make the dinner on the table. What you waste time pickin' them apples fur? I got apples plenty."

Ollie pouted as she removed her sunbonnet and hung it on a nail. "I like to be out too by this nice weather," she said with a resentful glance at the

two young ladies of leisure on the settee.

"Well, don't leave Pop know you throwed away your time," warned her mother. "You know how it unpleases him—that there. Here, Eunice, dish up the corn-starch in these here saucers," she ordered as the girl came in with two steaming dishes. "Use the common saucers fur all, only Doc and the two ladies not. Do you hear?" she said threateningly, looking at the girl's absent countenance. "I want to have it right done!"

Daisy took up her note-book. "A Pennsylvania Dutch farm-hand," she repeated as she wrote, "is treated as an honoured guest. Curious custom. Peter, you have a cinch of it here, haven't you? Now if you married Ollie and became one of the family——"

"Daisy!" Georgiana protested.

[&]quot;I was only going to say, Georgiana, he'd be up

against it then—he couldn't lay off when he had headaches and he wouldn't have his evidently dainty and fastidious appetite catered to. So I wouldn't advise you, Peter, to marry Ollie. And," she added, lowering her voice for Peter's ear alone, "she has an awful figure, hasn't she?—she looks like a yard of pump-water! But why Ollie isn't gone on you, Peter, I can't understand, for you're certainly the least woozy-looking—"

She was checked by the entrance of Abe and his father, who now came into the kitchen and took their places at the table, where the boarders joined them. Abe looked half sullen, half shamefaced, with a scowl for his mother's overtures to him and furtive glances at Eunice as she moved about the table setting cups of coffee and saucers of corn-

starch at each place.

Kinross looked on at this little by-play with

sympathetic interest.

"The fellow will marry that dowerless girl," he confidently thought. "Trust a quiet girl like that to play her cards cleverly! She has Abe where she wants him! No doubt she's a cat, like all other women, and is working that youth as much to 'spite' his mother as to make a good market for herself. Women are all alike fundamentally."

T was Sunday evening, "beau night" in the social circle of the Morningstars, and Ollie, dressed in her best furbelows, was seated in the "front room," which was never opened except on "the Sabbath." Ollie was awaiting the arrival of her "follower." She was looking very complacent as she rocked herself in the big "stuffed" rocking-chair. She had been slower than most of the girls in the neighbourhood in attracting a suitor, and now that a young man of means who owned his own farm "clear," had begun to "wait upon" her with significant regularity every Sunday night, she was feeling encouraged.

Eunice was seated near her at one of the win-

dows, an open Bible on her lap.

She was not, like Ollie, dressed in her "Sunday clothes." The truth was, Eunice did not have any Sunday clothes. But the fresh gingham kitchen gown of dark blue which she wore, with a bit of cheap lace around her neck, threw out the fairness of her face and hair and did for her what all Ollie's finery could not do for that young woman's fat round visage.

A few feet away, in the open door-way leading

out to the porch, Dr. Kinross sat smoking a pipe and reading a Sunday paper. Unlike Mr. Morningstar and Abe, he did not celebrate the Day of Rest by sitting about in a toilet consisting of "Sunday pants," a white shirt without a collar, and no vest or coat. He wore his overalls as usual.

His reading of his newspaper was varied with speculations as to why Eunice so industriously read the Bible. Was she devout? He had always believed that he had a constitutional dislike of devout people—unless they were Roman Catholics, in which case they were rather picturesque. But evangelical devoutness, even in the illiterate from whom one expected no better, was generally nauseating. Or was it the girl's mental hunger which led her to read the only book permitted on "the Sabbath" to any one over whom Mr. Morningstar had any authority?

Ollie Morningstar was regarding with pride the furnishings of the best front room. Her parlour boasted of some elegancies that no other parlour in the township possessed; for besides the inevitable plaster of Paris cat and "crazy jug" (the latter consisting of a large-sized bottle covered with putty, and stuccoed with various objects such as buttons, beans, pieces of glass and so forth, and the whole gilded over to produce a wonderful effect), there was the large, elegant coloured picture—Swift and Company's advertisment of lard—por-

traying two great, fat, oval hogs leaning drowsily against a fence, with a lurid sunset in the background. Ollie thought it lovely, though of course not so beautiful as "Rock of Ages" framed in red plush and gilt, representing a young lady in a nightgown hanging to a cross, the angry billows dashing against the rocks on which she kneels and her long and remarkably abundant hair flowing in ripples far down her back. These things were among the compensations of Ollie's sordid lot.

Presently, her complacent expectation and the reading of Kinross and Eunice were interrupted by Georgiana and Daisy, who strolled into the parlour and seated themselves, Daisy on the front doorstep near Peter, and Georgiana on the window-sill beside Eunice. Georgiana carried over her arm the skirt and waist of a pretty white gown. She and Daisy having held counsel and reasoned that the girl Eunice must keenly feel her shabbiness in contrast with Ollie's gorgeousness, had decided to offer her a few of their own garments, beginning with this white dress of Georgiana's.

"It may serve to develop the girl's latent æsthetic sense to give her some pretty clothes," Georgiana had suggested. "Tasteful clothing is often really educative."

"Yes," Daisy had gravely agreed, "and I can imagine that Eunice might look awfully fetching if she sported-up. But," she added rather fretfully,

"I suppose she feels there isn't any inducement to sport up out here—with not a man about the place that isn't as woozy—excuse me, Georgiana—but that Eunice is too nice looking to care for Abe. Have you noticed how stuck on her he is? She'd be an awful goose to throw herself away—as nice looking as she is—on a fellow as tight across the chest as he is—as any one can see he is! Ugh!" Daisy shook her shoulders with a shudder. "If I had to marry a man with a nature like that-close and mean, you know-I'd get up some night and gently lay a wet towel over his nose and mouth. Then, you know, he'd be dead next morning. To be sure," she went on, "there's Pete-she might sport up for him-but he's such an indifferent thing! Give him his meals and that's all he wants. He doesn't look at girls. Not even at me—after I stooped to condescend to jolly him a little!"

"You entirely miss my point, Daisy, dear, Georgiana had returned gravely. "My object in offering Eunice a pretty gown is to try to awaken in her a sense of the Beautiful on a much higher plane than that you talk about."

Seated on the window-sill beside the object of her benevolent intentions, Georgiana led up tact-

fully to the matter of her gift.

"Eunice," she began earnestly, her eyes on the distant horizon which was just beginning to deepen its evening hues, "do you ever feel, in your nearness to Nature here, how really we ourselves are a part of all this wonderful Beauty? It seems to me that this environment," she added, without waiting for Eunice to reply, "ought to make us sensitive to Beauty in every detail of life."

Kinross grinned behind his newspaper and settled himself to enjoy the conversation. He was finding

Georgiana very diverting.

Eunice looked up from her book, her dark eyes dreamy and absent.

"Sensitive to beauty even to the point of feeling out of harmony with our environment if we are not tastefully dressed," Georgiana went on. "And so," she ended graciously, laying the gown she held, across Eunice's lap, "I want to give you this pretty white gown."

Eunice's eyes grew wide with a questioning surprise. "You want to give it to me?" she asked wonderingly. "But why?"

Kinross, from behind his newspaper, found himself listening intently to hear what Eunice would say.

"Because I feel," Georgiana smiled encouragingly, "that even so trifling a thing as our clothes can help us to get into right relations with life."

The girl's puzzled gaze seemed trying to make it out. But before she could reply, Ollie leaned forward and eagerly examining the embroidery and ruffles on the pretty dress lying across Eunice's lap, asked with undisguised covetousness, "Did you wear it fur nice or just fur so?"

"Oh, I wore it for 'nice,' "Georgiana smiled.

"Eunice she never did think at the cloes much, like what I do," Ollie added insinuatingly.

"That is perhaps commendable to a certain point," said Georgiana gently. "But one should give just enough attention to outward adornment to let it express something of the inner life. The refinement of our thoughts and feelings or the lack of it, is often symbolised by our dress. We should cultivate our natural inclinations for external harmonies—it is not right to be indifferent to them—they are a legitimate part of life."

She had addressed herself to Eunice, and the girl, still looking puzzled, answered uncertainly. "But when the lack of harmony with one's environment is fundamental—mere external adjustment

can't help things."

Georgiana looked nonplussed. Daisy, fumbling the pages of a book she was not reading, dropped her lower lip in astonishment. Dr. Kinross put down his paper from before his face and took his pipe from his mouth. Even Ollie's face expressed surprise.

"We need not ever let our environment rule us," said Georgiana, looking as though she had lost her bearings, but making an effort to recover

herself.

"'I am the master of my fate, I am the captain of my soul."

And the great English poet, Robert Browning," she continued instructively, "called environment 'Machinery, just meant to give thy life its bent.' Emerson's whole gospel is man's spiritual mastery of circumstance. I am aware that most of us are slaves to it. But we can rise to a plane where, instead of letting it control us, we control it. Otherwise we go through life missing the true beauty, the perfect harmony of the Universe. I feel sure that you can find that harmony if you will keep your mind open to it. For instance," she said with a perfunctory playfulness, "begin by putting on this white gown—in which I feel you will give those about you a genuine æsthetic pleasure-and even help to educate them to a fine taste in the small things of life."

"I suppose you mean to do me a kindness," Eunice answered, her eyes downcast, "and so I thank you. But it would humiliate me to be a recipient of charity. I find more of the 'harmony' which you seem to value so highly, in clothing myself only in these clothes which I myself have earned, rather than in—other people's things, how-

ever beautiful they may be."

She gathered up the white gown as she spoke and laid it on Georgiana's lap.

Kinross saw that Georgiana, in her chagrin at

the girl's failure to appreciate her generous patronage, almost lost sight of the astonishing language she had used.

"If that is the way you feel," she answered, "very well. I beg your pardon if I have offended. I did not mean to. The fact is I have misunder-stood—I did not know that——" she broke off incoherently, unable to express herself in her new and confused impression of the farm girl.

"Stung again!" exclaimed Daisy.

"Please, Daisy!" protested Georgiana.

"But indeed, Georgie," pleaded Daisy, "I can't blame Eunice for thinking it isn't worth while to wear glad rags out here when no one would see her anyway."

"That isn't the point at all," returned Geor-

giana, looking distressed.

"Are you givin' it back?" Ollie here demanded of Eunice incredulously. "Och, what makes you act so dumm? Mebbe," she said, turning to Georgiana, "it would fit me—if you don't want it."

"You are too stout and too short for it," Georgiana answered a little distantly. "It isn't that I want to get rid of the gown. I thought merely to encourage Eunice."

"Encourage me?" repeated Eunice, again

puzzled.

"But I see that I was mistaken," she said hastily. She half turned her back, with a movement that

closed the conversation. Eunice's eyes fell to her book again and for a time no one spoke, though Ollie's look of disgust at the loss of the proffered gown was louder than words.

Kinross replaced his pipe in his mouth and drew on it vigorously. This girl, Eunice—the sort of language she used, the ideas she expressed—talking about the want of harmony with her environment being "fundamental!"

"For an unschooled Pennsylvania Dutch girl of the backwoods,"—but his reflection was checked by a whispered remark from Daisy at his side.

"Imagine that yard of pump-water, Ollie, in one of Georgiana's gowns! She looks as though she weighed two hundred and fifty Fahrenheit!"

"Do you mean avoirdupois?"

"Now, Pete, you needn't be so smart!" she retorted resentfully. "What if I do mean avoirdupois? Oh, dear!" she sighed, "I never seem to be cock-sure of a Fact. I almost wish I were clever instead of pretty!"

"Now if you was Georgie," he remarked,

"you'd be both; ain't?"

"Peter," Daisy gently reproved him, "I wouldn't be shocked if you called me Daisy. (Sweet name, isn't it?) But to permit yourself the liberty of calling Miss Ellery 'Georgie'—that's the limit! So you think," she added, "that she's both clever and beautiful? And she thinks you, Peter," she

confided to him, "have a latent fineness concealed somewhere about you—"

" A whatever?"

Daisy's answer was arrested by Georgiana's rising from the window-sill and sitting down beside her on the front door-step; Georgiana had evidently quite recovered her not-easily-disturbed equanimity.

"What are you reading?" she inquired of Daisy in the tone of gentle patronage she always used to her cousin and for which Daisy appeared humbly grateful. "Or, I should say, what is that book you are *not* reading? One of those that father made you pack?"

"Yes," sighed Daisy, "this one is to equip me for our European tour next summer. I'm on Switzerland now. It's perfectly dear!" she said with perfunctory enthusiasm. "The author has so

many pretty thoughts about the scenery."

Georgiana smiled indulgently. "Do you know, Daisy, what book you and I ought to have brought with us to read in this setting?—with this background?" she asked, waving her hand abroad to indicate the farm at large.

"Which?" inquired Daisy respectfully. "Please to break it to me gently, Georgiana."

"Izaak Walton's Compleat Angler. It is remarkable that such an unpretentious work as The Compleat Angler should have lived since the seventeenth century and be so very much alive still."

"Wait! I'd better make a note of that," said

Daisy, gathering up her book and pencil.

"It lives," Georgiana went on thoughtfully, "because it so vividly exhales on every page Nature's true message. Why, if anything could make me want to go a-fishing, Izaak Walton's picture of its delights would tempt me. And the famous passage about the worm—in which he recommends anglers to be merciful to it——"

"The worm?" It was Eunice's soft voice that spoke impulsively. "It was not to the worm, but to the frog, that Izaak Walton recommended anglers to be merciful, wasn't it? 'Use him as though you loved him, that is, harm him as little as you may possibly, that he may live the longer,'"

she quoted.

Kinross leaned forward in his chair, his elbow on his knee, his chin on his hand. The two young ladies stared at the girl as though unable to credit the evidence of their ears.

"You have read The Compleat Angler?" Georgiana's astonished tones inquired.

"Many times," the girl answered—then suddenly coloured and shrank back a little. "I—have seen it—yes."

"You have seen it to some purpose since you are able to quote it so accurately."

Eunice looked down at the Bible on her knee and did not answer.

"But, Eunice, where did you get the book?" asked Georgiana.

" I—came by it—once."

"And you read it many times?" she persisted. Eunice glanced up with a faint smile. "Not so much for its didactic instructions about fishing—but for the anecdotes scattered through it, the quotations and songs and poems."

"You have the book in the house?" asked

Georgiana.

The girl looked uncomfortable. "I have not read it for more than a year," she said with evident evasion.

"If you are fond of reading—and of *such* reading—we shall be glad to let you have some of our books," said Georgiana in a tone of encouragement to struggling rural ambition.

"Offer her Some Facts about the Great Back-Boned Family," advised Daisy earnestly. "It's so fearfully uninteresting that I'm sure it must be very

instructive and beneficial."

"Thank you," Eunice replied. "But," she added with an uneasy glance at Ollie, "I never have time to read except on Sunday, and Mr. Morningstar would not allow me to read anything but the Bible then."

"But I am so glad to find," said Georgiana graciously, "that when you do have an opportunity

to read good literature you take advantage of it and that you read so appreciatively."

"I am glad to be a source of such happiness to you," said Eunice, speaking with a faint unconscious touch of irony that suddenly brought the colour to Georgiana's cheeks. Eunice herself looked as though she scarcely understood the vague discomfort which possessed her under the almost affectionate patronage of Miss Ellery.

The sound of a step on the porch—which evidently announced the expected arrival of Ollie's "regular comp'ny,"—led Eunice to quickly close her Bible and rise to go away.

But she was stopped on the threshold.

E UNICE was about to pass Ollie's steady comp'ny with a nod, but the young man stopped directly in her way and holding out his hand with a shy awkwardness, flushed deeply as he looked at her.

"Och!" exclaimed Ollie, turning in her chair to welcome him, but not rising, "but I'm glad you're here oncet! I'm so tired listenin' to the big words they're spittin' at each other here—yes, even Eunice yet! I didn't know Eunice could speak such high language! She ain't never done it around us still."

"Nor around me neither—I'd like, too, to hear her oncet," replied the young man, his bashful tones only just audible and his face and neck self-consciously red, as he retained Eunice's hand so that she could not pass on, and looked at her with an ardour in his gaze that appeared quite irrelevant in view of the general understanding that he came to "set up" with Ollie. "Won't you stay settin' on the porch, Eunice?" he nervously begged the girl.

Eunice looked at him in surprise. To ask her to commit a breach like that, to violate the social code

that no third person must be present at a Sunday night "setting up"—was he wandering in his wits? She tried to withdraw her hand, but could not—he held it tight—with Ollie, Dr. Kinross and the young ladies all looking on!

"This is the first time I have saw you—since I begun to come Sundays," he said with evidently gigantic effort to conquer his embarrassment at the acknowledgment he was making in Ollie's very presence. "Where was you at, Sunday nights, still, when I come over?"

"Where was she at?" spoke up Ollie boisterously. "Out on the back porch settin'—with our Abe. That's where she'd be to-night too, I guess, if Mom didn't jaw her so fur it!"

"With Abe!" repeated Ollie's ostensible "Friend" in a consternation that forgot the presence of others. "Her and Abe!"

Eunice dragged her fingers from his clasp and turned away before he could recover from the evident shock of Ollie's communication.

The three boarders, realising that they were de trop, also rose and went away. Ollie and the young man were left in solitary possession of the field for the evening's campaign.

"How many dupes are there in this freindshaft, I wonder!" Kinross said to himself as he strolled out into the garden, his pulse bounding with a strange excitement. "The young ladies think I'm

a country lout, Ollie thinks the young man, Hen Mucklehenny, comes to 'set up' with her, when evidently he is fatally smitten with Eunice (let him lay low if Abe discovers it). As for me, have I, too, been a dupe about that girl, Eunice? Is she a disguised college professor, or 'whatever'—as her conversation this evening might suggest? Her diction is certainly not the everyday tongue of the Morningstars! How the dickens does it happen?"

But too many circumstances—the Morningstars' selfish treatment of her, Abe's infatuation, her slavish work—these and other things rebutted the theory that she was anything else than what she pretended to be. How, then, account for that astonishing little revelation of herself this evening? He turned it over in every conceivable way, but could arrive at no conclusion concerning her. He decided that he must certainly make an opportunity for talking with her and investigate her thoroughly.

Meantime, Hen Mucklehenny's hesitation in taking advantage of the clear field left to him, and his slowness to seat himself in the rocker at Ollie's side, was attributed by her to his well-known bashfulness. It was thus that she had interpreted, also, his lack of ardour on every Sunday night that he had been with her. No amount of encouragment on her part had availed to warm him up to the sort of

love-making considered in that locality an essential

preface to matrimony.

"Hen," began Ollie, when at last they were rocking monotonously side by side in their big wooden rockers on the porch, "you ain't got no need to trouble to make so polite to our Eunice, seein' she ain't my right sister that way. It makes me no difference if she likes you or if she don't, her bein' only 'dopted and not our own flesh and blood. It wouldn't unplease me if you didn't make over her any."

"But," began Hen uneasily, "I didn't make polite to her just fur to please you, Ollie—not, just to say, fur that exactly; I——" he stopped

helplessly, looking distraught.

Ollie was slow to grasp a new idea. All she saw just now was that her bashful lover was more embarrassed than usual. "That's all right, Hen," she reassured him—quite irrelevantly the uncomfort-

able fellow thought.

They rocked in silence for a while. Pennsylvania Dutch courtships are wont to be punctuated by long periods of sepulchral silence. Hen's countenance, instead of expressing the ecstasies of a lover in the fair presence of his lady, looked as if he were sitting in a dentist's chair under the ordeal of an exposed nerve.

"Hen," said Ollie presently, in a tone of heavy

import, "I want to speak somepin to you."

Hen fidgetted, and waited to hear it.

"If you wasn't keepin' comp'ny with me, Hen, do you know what I'd near up and do?"

"But that needn't hold you back, Ollie, from nothin', fur I ain't just to say——"

Hen floundered again and was silent.

"I'd take and go to town and hire out fur a girl. Pop he holds me so close at home to the work and won't leave me go none—and if I was hired, I could mebbe go more'n I kin so. They anyhow kin have off in the evenings, still—hired girls in town kin."

"You needn't mind me, Ollie," Hen hastened to

reassure her; "you just go if you want."

But Ollie shook her head. "I thought at it, but I couldn't make my mind up to leave you, Hen."

Hen looked miserable.

"Or if I didn't hire out, I thought at going to a factory. In a factory you kin set all the time—and if there's one thing I love to do, it's settin'. And Pop he has cross if ever he sees me settin'. To be sure, Sally Schnabel, she disheartened me fur hirin' out. She hired, there fur a while, in town at such a boardin' house where there was twenty-two comers and goers and she says she had to work wonderful hard. She says at home on the farm she had only six to cook and wash fur—and twenty-two towards six—that's a difference, too—ain't?"

"Yes, anyhow," Hen dully acquiesced.

"And Sally she sayed them towners they wanted a hired girl to be a fool fur 'em—to run in a room when they rung a bell, like as if she was a dog, and to hand 'em things 'round the table instead of doin' their own stretchin'. Them ways I wouldn't take to so good."

"I guess," Hen agreed.

"And Sally she sayed the Missus wouldn't leave her have her reg'lar comp'ny come and set up with her—she tole Sally she didn't want no strange man comin' to her house. And Sally she tole her pretty quick, 'He ain't no strange man,' she says. 'I wouldn't go with no strange man. He's my reg'lar comp'ny.' Now think, Hen! Accusin' Sally of travellin' with a strange man!"

"To think anyhow!" said Hen.

"But a body could go to the Rooft Garden now and agin if you was hired in town. Oncet Abe he took me to such a theatre play at the Rooft Garden and if it wasn't grand yet! A man come on the stage named Mr. Montgomery. He was the willain. Now if he wasn't somepin fierce! Honest to goodness, Hen, he was the worst man I ever seen!"

"Now!" exclaimed Hen with forced sympathy.

"But then to be sure if I was in town stayin', me and you us we couldn't keep comp'ny Sunday evenings."

Hen's gloom deepened to despair.

"Ain't, Hen?" Ollie tried to rouse him to some ardour.

The fact was, the girl was weary of her bondage to her father's mercenariness and longed for the freedom from it that marriage would give her, especially marriage with one so well-fixed as Hen Mucklehenny; and she was hoping by this suggestion of going to town, to stir her lover into some alarm at the thought of losing her and thus precipitate their betrothal and marriage. True, he had been coming to see her only a few months; but where was the use of indefinite delay?

"Ain't, Hen, it would be some lonesome fur you if I went off?" she urged.

Again Hen squirmed in his chair, but he made no answer.

"But I'm thinkin' at going," Ollie threatened. "How would you put in your Sunday nights with me off, Hen?"

"I'd come and set up with—with Eunice," he blurted out, "if her and Abe wasn't keepin' comp'ny."

Ollie turned and stared at him stupidly.

"But that would give her false hopes—she'd think you meant it fur really. And I just *tole* you you ain't got no need to make so polite to her fur my sake."

"It would be fur my own sake, Ollie," Hen stammered.

But Ollie did not grasp his meaning. "To anyhow hear about me and see my folks—ain't?" she said, thus interpreting his words. "Yes, well, but——" she doubtfully shook her head at such a questionable manner of courting her.

"Would the folks leave you go to town to work somepin," Hen asked, unable to keep a touch of

hope out of his tone.

"I just would take and up and go!" declared Ollie. "I've got my age and kin go if I want. But to be sure, my bein' of age ain't no use to me when I'm livin' with Pop. To be sure when I'm livin' off of him, I must do all where he says."

"Must Abe too?" Hen asked with unexpected

and irritating irrelevance.

"If Abe must too?" she repeated his question. "Well, anybody would know that his bein' a male that way, he wouldn't be tied down like a female—

fur all he has to obey to Pop a good bit."

"Don't your Pop and Mom uphold to his keepin' comp'ny with—with Eunice?" Hen dragged the question out in an agony of embarrassment; "like what you sayed awhile back—that him and her would be settin' out on the back porch if your Mom didn't jaw?"

"Was that so interestin' to you, Hen?" Ollie asked a bit wonderingly. "Well, it would stand to reason they wouldn't want Abe to throw hisself away on no bound girl where couldn't bring him no

aussteuer and Abe so well-fixed as he'll be and could marry near any girl in the township."

"But what's Abe's views?" Hen inquired. "Does he favour her agin your Pop and Mom?"

"Well, to be sure, Eunice would be anyhow dumm if she didn't try to get our Abe—him bein' her only chanct; fur Pop won't never leave her go none and she don't never see other ones, nor other ones don't see her neither. And to be sure, Abe he favours her some too."

"If she seen other ones, mebbe she wouldn't favour Abe so much neither. This here dude from town now—does she favour him any?" Hen put out uneasily.

"Well," said Ollie contemptuously, "I guess she ain't lookin' that high—our Eunice yet! And him a towner! Why, even me, I wouldn't look to him! He won't bother even with them two town young ladies where's so well-fixed and got it so good they can board all summer and spend out money without workin' nothin' to bring more in—not even their own housework at home. A body's got to be pretty well-fixed to do like that, ain't? The Doc he's dressed hisself up in overalls (did you take notice to it?) and he's makin' he's a farm-hand hired to Pop!—just so's them girls will leave him be! Now think! Ain't he comic?"

"Now!" said Hen incredulously.

[&]quot;Indeed yes!" affirmed Ollie.

"He must be pretty good-fixed, too, to lay off all summer without workin'."

"Yes," Ollie agreed, "he must make no amount

of money fur his doctorin'."

"Well, then, if Eunice don't look so high—there's me—I'm better fixed than what Abe is. And her not havin' no aussteuer wouldn't make me no difference."

Hen's tongue was fairly running away with him. Again Ollie turned to stare at him in dumb amazement.

"What you talkin', Hen? What would you be wantin' to give hopes to Eunice fur when you're my regular comp'ny?"

"That's where you're makin' a big mistake,

Ollie!"

The fatal words were out! Hen grasped the arms of his rocker as though to save himself from plunging into an abyss that yawned at his feet.

"Makin' a mistake! How am I makin' a mistake?" the bewildered Ollie demanded. "Ain't

you settin' up with me Sundays?"

"If I am, it ain't because I come here fur that intention. It's because yous all had a misunder-standing about the lady friend I wanted to pick out—which it was Eunice and not you, Ollie."

Now that Hen had got started, it seemed as easy as rolling down hill. He exulted buoyantly, like one who had shaken off shackles.

Ollie rose and confronted him, her dull complexion flushing a deep red.

"You come here to set up with Eunice!"

"That's wot!" said Hen courageously.

"Why didn't you say so?"

"You didn't give me no chanct. Yous all was so sure I meant you, Ollie. Yous none of yous could see that a feller might want Eunice, even if she don't have no *aussteuer*, her bein' such a good looker that way."

"You just made a fool out of me, Hen Mucklehenny!" Ollie cried, almost choking with her

shame and indignation.

"I didn't go fur to do no sich a thing, Ollie."

"Well, you kin just go home and stay home!" the girl said vindictively; "fur Pop ain't leavin' Eunice keep comp'ny with no one—our Abe nor no one else! Pop says what did he raise her fur all these years just to leave her run when she's old enough to be of some use and pay him back fur his supportin' her?"

"Won't you go tell her I'm waitin' here to set

up with her?" Hen pleaded.

Ollie glared at him dully, her bosom heaving. "Well, Hen Mucklehenny, to show you I don't want you and Eunice is welcome to you, I will go tell her—but I'll tell Pop and Mom, too, and you kin settle it with them yet—and I wish you luck with 'em!"

She turned her back on him and left him. He

waited, fairly quivering with eagerness for the appearance of the sweet, fair girl whose image filled his dull soul. Were his many weeks of dreaming of her about to be crowned with the actual realisation of the bliss of "sitting up" with her? Would she, in a few moments, be seated in this chair at his side, her hand clasped in his? His ecstatic expectation quite drove from his mind the spleen and disappointment of poor Ollie.

She, meantime, had sought her parents in the kitchen and had wrathfully related to them that it was Eunice and not *she*, with whom Hen was want-

ing to keep company.

Mrs. Morningstar's indignation against both Hen and her foster-daughter was quite equal to Ollie's. Mr. Morningstar was hardly less chagrinned, for he had been more than satisfied with the prospect of so good a match for his daughter and he did not wish to part with Eunice at all.

"I ain't leavin' her keep comp'ny with no one," he obstinately affirmed, after the first shock of Ollie's news, as he smoked his pipe by the kitchen window, the smallness of his soul shining out of his little blinking eyes and reflected in the stubborn set of his thin lips. "Not even fur the sake of keepin' her off of our Abe. She ain't to waste her time with no beau! You just go 'round front, Ollie, and tell Hen Mucklehenny I ain't leavin' Eunice keep comp'ny with him nor no one else!" he commanded.

"You go tell him, Pop. I don't want to go near him no more."

But Mrs. Morningstar interposed an objection. "It'll give us an awful bad name—our puttin' it out that she hasn't dare to take her chances, too, like other ones. Better leave Hen see her to-night. Then till next Sabbath a'ready, we kin tell her she has to tell him she don't feel fur settin' up with him."

"I'll tell her she's to tell him that right aways this evening and not wait till next Sabbath," responded Mr. Morningstar, rising to go to the girl. "You don't know how fur him and her might git along in one evening. I ain't takin' no risks like that. She's to tell him right aways she don't take to him."

"Then he can't say we kep' her back," Mrs. Morningstar nodded approvingly. "Don't cry, Ollie," she tried to comfort the girl who was snivelling audibly. "There's others will be glad to take Hen's place."

But Ollie knew better and her disappointment was keen.

"Where is Eunice at?" Mr. Morningstar asked, coming back from the kitchen porch where he had gone to look for her.

A search ensued, in which the girl could not be found either in her own bedroom, or in the front room with the young lady boarders, nor yet in the garden with "the Doc," who was strolling about in the twilight, smoking. Where could she possibly be? The suspicious circumstance that Abe also was not about, pointed to the possibility, almost the certainty, that they had gone off somewhere together.

"Abe's horse and buggy ain't in the barn," Ollie reported to her parents as they all came together again in the kitchen after their investigation of the place. "I locked open the barn-door and looked oncet and it ain't there! She's took and went out buggy-ridin' with him, I bet!"

"She wouldn't do it to go off with him unbeknownst—it ain't like her ways," Mr. Morningstar questioned this circumstantial evidence.

"I wouldn't of thought *Abe* would of took and done it unbeknownst!" Mrs. Morningstar lamented. "But *she* won't have the dare to do it agin!" she declared threateningly.

"I'll go 'round front and fix Hen Mucklehenny all right!" Mr. Morningstar suddenly said with ghoulish satisfaction, turning to the door. "I'll just tell him Eunice and Abe's went out buggy-ridin' together. That'll dishearten him from comin' round here after her any more."

As he left the room, Ollie's eyes followed him, their customary sullen dulness dissipated for the moment by a reflection of her father's spitefulness. INROSS, sauntering in front of the porch, overheard the farmer "fixing" poor Hen.
"There ain't no use your settin' here waitin'—she's went off buggy-ridin' with our Abe—him and her's wonderful took with each other and neither of 'em's got eyes fur no other ones!"

"I seen Abe's buggy ahead of me when I was drivin' over here," Hen answered, his tone expressing timid doubt of the truth of Mr. Morningstar's assertion. "And I didn't take notice to no lady settin' alongside of him. He rode clean down the pike ahead of me. Our buggies was so close apart, I could see right into hisn. And till I got here a'ready, Eunice she was here."

"She knowed better'n to git in with him near here. She likely walked over the school-house and behind Zoar's Church up; and then got in his buggy above the town out—so's us we wouldn't see her."

Very low in his mind and looking abjectly disappointed and discouraged, Henny, on receiving this information, rose to go home.

Kinross mused on the situation, as for an hour longer he wandered up and down the garden in the gathering night. His promenade brought him every now and then to a corner of the house from which he could see, in an unoccupied and reputedly "haunted" part of the building, a faint flickering light in one of the windows.

He had been told of the tradition concerning the ghost who visited this wing of the old house—the Morningstars were very proud of the distinction of living with the only ghost of the township, and strangers to the neighbourhood were never left long in ignorance of it. Kinross felt sure, from what he had seen of the family, that none of them could possibly be induced to go near that haunted quarter of the house after dark and he was naturally puzzled, therefore, to account for the light he saw in the window just now. He thought he would ask Mrs. Morningstar to let him sleep in the haunted room some night and see whether he could not meet and lay the spirit that troubled it. It did not occur to him to associate the light with the absence of Eunice. He accepted, as unquestioningly as did Hen Mucklehenny, Mr. Morningstar's story of her clandestine drive with Abe. Indeed, the family's agitation over the fact was keeping them up long after their usual early bedtime, as he knew from the lamp-light in the kitchen to which the circuit of his stroll periodically brought him.

His impressions of Eunice were in dire confusion

and refused to lend themselves to readjustment. That a girl capable of even accidentally reading The Compleat Angler, and discussing it as she had done, should "take up" with Abe Morningstar, was singular, to say the least. The flower-like beauty of her face, the peculiarly thrilling quality of her voice, her grace and, in some respects, exquisiteness, made it seem incongruous that she should, as Mr. Morningstar had expressed it, be "wonderful took with our Abe." And then the intelligence she had revealed this evening-what was that she had said about The Compleat Angler? -it was not "for its didactic instructions about fishing" that she cared for it, but "for the anecdotes scattered through it, the quotations and songs and poems." Good Lord! Should he presently discover that Abe was familiar with Chaucer and Spenser and that Ollie was a student of Shakspere and Milton? He couldn't have been more astonished if he had found Mrs. Morningstar quoting Henry James, or come across Mr. Morningstar intelligently reading George Meredith. As a psychologist, he could not reconcile the fact of the girl's having left school at the age of twelve, according to her foster-mother's own acknowledgment, with her capacity for assimilating Izaak Walton's little classic. He recalled that Mrs. Morningstar had told him of the child's grief at being taken from school. "She cried wonderful,"

the woman had said in the unsympathetic tone with which she always spoke of the girl.

"It would take a Sherlock Holmes to ferret out this mystery," he said to himself.

As he came to this conclusion, a turn in his walk brought him in sight again of the haunted back building and he saw that the lighted window had become dark. "The ghost has gone to roost," he decided.

A moment later as he came around to the front of the house, the light of a lamp illumined one of the upstairs bedroom windows, the room in which, as he knew, Ollie and Eunice slept. But a moment before, he had passed the kitchen in which he had seen Ollie and her parents sitting about the table. Who, then, was in that upstairs room? No member of the Morningstar household would commit the extravagance of leaving a lamp burning in an empty room. Had the ghost wandered from the back room to the front one? But ghosts did not move by the light of kerosene lamps.

Presently, in his circuit about the house, he found that the trio in the kitchen had at last taken their lamps and gone upstairs, leaving the kitchen door unlatched for him and for the truant lovers.

Kinross felt an impulse of pity for Eunice as he thought of the retribution she would have to face on her return, or on the morrow.

"But she never seems to mind the old lady's up-

braidings—she takes them with an apparently philosophical calm," he thought. "I wonder whether, against all the stress that will be brought to bear upon her, she will, with equal calmness and philosophy, persist in her devotion to Abe. I should think she'd find it hard to hold out against the cold-blooded obstinacy of that brutal old Morningstar-harder than against the woman's warm temper. I fancy the Dutchman could be cruel under some circumstances. Now I'm inclined to think Funice would fare better if she favoured that sheep that came to court her this evening-Hen Mucklehenny. He looks inoffensive and soft-heartedwhile Abe Morningstar is a genuine son of his father-small-souled, selfish and brutal. But she doesn't know that it is she Hen came to see-and the Morningstars will take care that she doesn't find it out. I might do her a good turn by telling her on the quiet."

His meditation turned, at last, from sheer weariness, into another channel and he fell to thinking of the awkward situation he would have to confront when, on his return to town, he would be obliged to meet Miss Ellery and Miss Parks in his true character. How he was going to carry it off was a question which not infrequently occupied his

leisure moments.

"I wonder whether Georgiana was in the least shaken out of her orbit by the shock of Eunice's correcting her quotation from Izaak Walton and declining to be 'a recipient of charity'—that was the damsel's phraseology, if I remember. Probably not. She could hardly forget herself long enough to entertain more than a mere passing wonder about another woman.

"Her wishing to give that dress to Eunice—it was not because of any sympathy with Eunice—it was merely an exploiting of herself, an insistence upon her theories, which she feels set her above and apart from the common herd. If something could happen to her to knock out of her her own fool idea of herself and make her just a simple, natural girl, why, with such beauty and distinction as she has, she might be a very charming woman."

He took his pipe from his mouth and clasped his hands behind him, as he bent back his head to the stars, while he dwelt upon the picture of a revised Georgiana, which his fancy called up. He was just wondering whether the deception he was playing upon her in his disguise might not be made in some way to work such a revision in her, when his attention was arrested by the sound of approaching carriage wheels.

In the quiet of the country evening the beat of the horse's hoofs could be heard from a distance and he had time to decide that it was, no doubt, the buggy containing the truant lovers that was coming up the road and to wonder how their return would be met by the angry heads of the house, when the vehicle drove in at the barn and he saw, as he strolled in that direction, that Abe was alone.

What had the fellow done with Eunice? Kinross was surprised into a quick feeling of alarm for the girl's safety. He was on the point of stepping after Abe into the barn to inquire after her—when he bethought him that he would do better to keep out of the "mix-up."

"It's none of my business. Of course Abe would

justly resent my solicitude for the girl."

So, with the reflection that he was living in the midst of fast-thickening mysteries, he shook out his

pipe and went indoors for the night.

To reach his bedroom he had to pass the opening to the long, narrow hall which led into the redoubtable back building and it was just as he came to this passage that his step was arrested by something which gave him a momentary thrill of excitement. The lamp he carried shed a light down the passage and his eye was caught by a white figure moving swiftly and noiselessly at the farthest end of it. Almost instantly the figure disappeared. Whether it had run around a turn in the hall or dissolved into ether, he could not be sure. Was it a wraith—or what? Should he pursue it? No, its garb was too suggestive of a woman's night-gown to make pursuit on his part advisable. He would

get Mrs. Morningstar's permission to sleep down there some night and then, if ghost it were, he would surely make its acquaintance.

With this conclusion, and feeling actually exhausted with the evening's succession of episodes, he went to bed.

INROSS' aversion, next morning, to departing with his books into the woods, the small interest he felt in the philosophy of the schools as compared with the philosophy of the actual life of the Morningstar farm-house, led him to risk exciting the suspicion of his fellow boarders by "hanging round" the kitchen porch during the greater part of the forenoon.

On coming downstairs to his breakfast, he had found Eunice, as usual, at her kitchen drudgery, moving about, as she always did, as though only half conscious of her surroundings. If, as the result of last night's developments, there had been

a scene, the girl bore no sign of it.

He put a few "leading" questions to Mrs. Morningstar as she gave him his breakfast. This matter of his late and solitary breakfast had been a troublesome one to adjust in his assumption of the character of a farm-hand, since not even his desire to retain his incognito would have induced him to get up to the family's four o'clock meal. He had finally, after considerable difficulty, negotiated with his landlady for breakfast in his room,

except on such mornings as the coast was left clear by the early departure of the other boarders to the woods or "wherever," as Mrs. Morningstar referred to their wanderings.

"Well," he remarked as he broke an egg, while Mrs. Morningstar filled a glass with milk for him, "where was Eunice last night, any way, when you

were all looking for her?"

"Och, her!" snapped Mrs. Morningstar disparagingly. "Well, us we conceited she'd went off buggy-ridin' with Abe. The way she tries behind my back to make up with our Abe!—I tell her she hasn't a shame!—and after all I done fur her yet a'ready!"

"But she had not gone with Abe?"

"No; here when Ollie she went up to bed, I guess near an hour after we was astin' you had you saw Eunice anywheres, why, there was Eunice in bed asleep. Ollie she waked her and ast her where was she a while back, when we was all lookin' fur her, and Eunice she got stubborn-headed and wouldn't answer to Ollie; she's the worst stubborn-head, that girl is! I just believe she was out somewheres makin' up to our Abe. But Abe he got rid of her and went to see some other one, I guess, fur he didn't come home till late."

Kinross wondered whether the fond mother of Abe really believed that he was the unwilling victim of Eunice's Machiavellian plots to attract him, or whether her maternal jealousy merely invented this reluctance on his part.

"I don't know what's come over Eunice here lately," Mrs. Morningstar complained as she sawed thick slices from a huge loaf of home-made bread. "Till a couple days back, she always minded to me and Pop and done what she was tole. Here this morning I jawed her fur not takin' that frock Miss Ellery wanted to give her. I saved to her what right had she to as good as throw away a frock when us we had to buy her all her cloes. But she wouldn't make me no answer. Then Pop he saved she is to tell Miss Ellery she's changed her mind and will take the frock off of her if she wants her to. And Eunice she didn't make Pop no answer neither. Then Pop he saved to her, did she understand she was to do it as soon as the young ladies come down this morning? And, mind you, Eunice she tole Pop she wouldn't! To Pop she sayed that! I couldn't hardly believe I heerd it. Why, our Ollie she wouldn't have the dare to tell Pop she wouldn't!"

"And Eunice never did so before?"

"Well, I better guess she didn't!"

"But what do you suppose has made the worm suddenly turn?—that is to say, how do you account for her asserting herself like that all at once?"

"Well," said Mrs. Morningstar, "to be sure, no person ever offered her no frock before."

"There's something in that," Kinross admitted.

"And then I wouldn't put it past her that she's spunkin' up because she thinks she's gettin' our Abe."

"He is a prize," granted Kinross with apocryphal sarcasm.

"I guess too," Mrs. Morningstar vigorously acquiesced in this view of her son.

"What did Mr. Morningstar do about it when Eunice refused to obey him?" inquired Kinross with interest.

"Well, I never seen Pop more surprised. He jawed her and he argued her till he didn't know what to say to her no more. But she just kep' her stubborn head and sayed she wouldn't do it to take the frock. Then Pop tole her she needn't wear it herself—she could give it to Ollie after the boarders had went home a'ready. Well, then, Eunice sayed, if Ollie wanted to wear it, she'd have to ast fur it herself. Pop explained her that it was some different, too, again, fur Ollie to ast fur cloes off of some one, to what it was fur a 'dopted girl dependent on other folks."

Mrs. Morningstar, as she talked, stood with her back to the door which led into the summer kitchen and so occupied was she with her story that she did not hear Eunice's light step as the girl came into the room bearing a pile of dishes that had just

been washed. The clatter of the plates as they were placed in the closet made her turn with a little start.

Eunice also turned and stood with her back to the closet as she lifted her head and looked at her foster-mother.

Kinross, his breakfast untouched, watched her with almost breathless interest. He seemed always to get a new impression of her face when her usually downcast eyes were raised and the soul that looked out of them was, as it were, unveiled. Those dark, luminous eyes suggested an intensity of life within of which the customary stillness of her bearing gave no hint.

She came forward and stood at the table. Her face was pale and she spoke in a low musical voice, with its little peculiar thrill, which Kinross was beginning to find singularly haunting.

"I overheard what you were saying to Dr.

Kinross."

It was the first time she had spoken his name in the whole month of his stay at the farm and it fell on his ears strangely.

"I have made up my mind that if you feel my support a burden to you and if I don't earn the food and clothes you give me, I shall go away and earn my living elsewhere."

Mrs. Morningstar, unmindful of her boarder, stared, for an instant, dumbfounded. "You'll go

away!" she repeated with a half gasp. "Where'd you go, say?"

"I don't know. But I will no longer accept charity—from you or any one. If you think you bestow charity upon me, I will go away."

"You've got the right to stay here and work to pay us fur all them back years we kep' you before you was old enough to work fur your livin'!" retorted Mrs. Morningstar angrily. "You leave Pop hear you speak about goin' away!—and you'll see oncet!"

"Abe tells me that almost ever since you first took me, I have really earned my living by the work I have done, and that for a long time I have earned wages besides, which have not been paid me. So it would seem," she said with a dreary little smile, "that you are recipients of charity from me."

"Abe tole you that there?" exclaimed the woman. "I don't believe it! Our Abe he ain't that dumm! Don't you darst to leave Pop hear you say Abe spoke you such things!—do you hear?—he'd jaw Abe turrible. Do you hear?" she demanded

"Yes."

"Well, are you obeyin' to me?"

"I will not promise that."

"Eunice! How darst you say you won't to me? You never done it before!—what's come over you?"

"Abe says," the girl repeated, "that you have no authority over me now that I am of age."

"And what, I'd like to know, makes Abe put such things as them in your head!" she desperately cried. "Well, Pop'll soon get 'em out—you'll see! Here!" she commanded, "clear off these here things!"

Obediently Eunice turned to gather up a handful of dishes, with which, after a moment, she left the room. She had not once looked at Kinross.

"Now you see," complained Mrs. Morningstar, "how she tries to work our Abe, till she gits him to talk things agin his own Pop and Mom to her! To think he'd say that us we owe her wages yet! Och, my souls!"

It was beyond expression, and she dropped it and began vigorously to scrape the plates that had been left after the breakfast of the young ladies.

As Kinross mechanically finished his own breakfast he was more than ever lost in wonder at the girl's infatuation for Abe Morningstar. It seemed inconsistent with everything else about her. It made him feel an unreasoning impatience with her and put a damper upon the sympathy he would otherwise have felt for her situation. He was possessed, however, with a strong curiosity concerning her, and during all the rest of the day he was on the lookout for an opportunity to talk with her

alone. He realised, with a grim sense of the humour of it, that it was the first time in his life he had ever voluntarily sought to talk with a girl.

He found himself astonished and annoyed, as the hours went by, to realise the difficulty, the well-nigh impossibility, of finding the opportunity he sought. The girl herself added to the difficulty, with her shy reserve and a certain dignity about her which made him feel almost guilty of an impertinence in seeking her confidence.

So intent was he upon securing the chance he desired that he carelessly let himself be discovered by Georgiana and Daisy, loafing on the kitchen porch in the middle of the afternoon when they would naturally expect him to be in the fields with

his employer.

"Have you a headache again this afternoon?" Daisy curiously inquired as the two girls, looking warm and tired from a long walk, sank upon the porch steps where he sat.

"Yes, I have it in my head somepin wonder-

ful," he readily lied.

"I am surprised," declared Daisy, "that Mr. Morningstar would employ such an invalid as you are, Peter—as much on the make as he is!"

"If farm-hands wasn't so scarce to get," Peter answered, recklessly improvising Pennsylvania Dutch dialect, "he wouldn't keep me."

Mrs. Morningstar, who had stepped out to the

porch bench to "pick over" a pan of gooseberries, just in time to hear this remark of Peter's, bent back her head and gave forth a loud laugh. "You bet he wouldn't!" she cried.

"Well, since you aren't working," Daisy suggested, "you can put in your time forgetting your headache by amusing me. Can you play euchre?"

"I don't play nothin' but hymn-tunes."

"O my gracious!" groaned Daisy. "Well, it isn't any of my business to butt in, but I should think," she observed reprovingly, "that you would at least make good your lost time, Pete, by helping Mrs. Morningstar to pick those berries. But I suppose," she added, taking on her air of acquiring useful information, "that to help a woman would not fall in with your ideas of manliness, would it? The Germans of rural Pennsylvania are just like the Germans of the fatherland in that respect at least—their lack of gallantry to women. I was in Germany three days last summer and in all that time I never once saw a man chivalrously help a woman. And about here!"—she rolled up her eyes expressively.

"Now," protested Pete, "I seen a native help

a woman with a basket, this morning."

"You must have been mistaken, Peter," Daisy said incredulously.

"No, I ain't neither. I seen him when he done it."

"Was he a Pennsylvania German?" she asked sceptically.

"Dutch as snitz."

"I'd like to make a note of it," she said, gathering up her pencil and book. "Tell me, Peter, what were the circumstances and how did he help her?"

"She was his wife and he helped her fasten a basket on her back to carry into the village."

Daisy dropped her note-book and looked at Peter severely, while Georgiana gazed at him pen-

sively.

"I am disappointed in you, Peter," Daisy said reproachfully. "Miss Ellery and I both supposed that you had fine, though undeveloped, perceptions or intuitions, which, with a little encouragement, might reveal you to yourself."

She turned her back on him in disdain and began to help Mrs. Morningstar with her berries. "You're not worth while, Pete," she cast at him over her shoulder. "A man with such views is capable of other underhand dealings."

Georgiana sighed. "If my faith in human nature were not very large, I should believe that to give even a suggestion of real chivalry to a born Pennsylvania German was almost a psychic impossibility. Frankly, Peter, isn't it?"

"It may be that kind of an impossibility," answered Peter in a tone of reluctance to commit him-

self, "since you say so. I ain't denyin' no such statements."

"But, Peter, I had hopes of you that day you so nicely picked up my hat-pin for me," said Georgiana in her pat-on-the-head tone of voice.

"Done it to see how the pin was made, that you could stick it right through your skull and not kill yourself," he said, disclaiming any gallantry in the act.

Both the girls regarded him dubiously; but the

stolidity of his face was impenetrable.

"Pete," said Daisy frankly, "sometimes I have a suspicion that you're foxy and are jollying us! Say! what dandy big gooseberries these are!" she exclaimed with characteristic irrelevance, eating more than she picked, to Mrs. Morningstar's evident discomfort.

"Daisy," said Georgiana in a tone that dropped Peter and Mrs. Morningstar out of the conversation, "did you get any news in your letter from Belle?"

"News! Well, I should say! Don't you think, the Civic Club in its prospectus for next winter's work, has gone and put me—me—down for a paper!"

Consternation was in her face and voice. Georgi-

ana smiled.

"About what?"

"A theme on which I can't possibly ask uncle

to write the paper for me—The Bad Effect upon the Morals of the Community of the Autumn Displays of Underwear in the Department-Store Windows, Especially the Figures of Women in Night-Gowns; and the Advisability of the Civic Club's Requesting the Removal of Such Demoralising Displays—that's my subject."

"If they looked at the matter from a higher plane," said Georgiana, "they would see that it is their own minds that need to be regenerated rather

than the shop-windows."

"Let me take that down!" cried Daisy. "That shall be my opening sentence. I shall also suggest," she went on as she wrote, "as a preventive (or preventative?—which is it?) of so many unhappy marriages, that in place of the exhibit of women in night-gowns, they display a windowful of men in their pajamas. The preachers wouldn't have any jobs then!"

"You would better let me edit your paper before you stand up and read it to the club," Georgiana advised. "Does Belle write anything

else?"

"Every one is out of town, she says, and there's nothing doing; and she says she can hardly wait until you come back and meet that new professor of Psychology! Oh!" exclaimed Daisy with a little squeal of delight, "won't it be bully!"

Georgiana tried to look dignified, but only

succeeded in looking interested and rather

pleased.

"Isn't it perfectly killing, Georgie, the way every one seems to have settled things between you and that Psychology man?"

Kinross leaned his back against a pillar of the porch and gave himself up to enjoying himself.

The young ladies, meantime, supposed their very language to be as incomprehensible to the farmer's wife and Pete as though they spoke a

foreign tongue.

"Do you know," said Georgiana, her countenance softening with her pleasing reflections, "that even father has caught the infection of Dr. Kinross'-well, popularity (I dislike the word). You know he is not apt to notice such things, but he remarked to me several times that he had never seen a young man so turn the heads of all the women—even the married women!"

"But, Georgiana," complained Daisy, "then I shall hate him, I know. I always do hate a man I'm expected to like and approve of. And a fellow who makes all the girls hysterical about him-Oh, I know I'll scrap with him!"

"He won't be apt to give you a chance if all

they say of him is true," smiled Georgiana.

"I shall force him to see that I despise him!" Georgiana laughed, then added, "Father himself told me that if he did not know Dr. Kinross, he would think he must be a bounder, the way the girls and women make themselves silly about him. But the queer thing about it, father says, is that Dr. Kinross doesn't reciprocate their attentions at all, and is rather a cynic—indifferent to women—indeed, rather afraid of them."

"What a chump!" cried Daisy contemptuously. "That's worse yet. No, Georgie, I refuse to like that man. And if you don't jilt him, I shall!"

"Jilt him? I trust my relations with him will be on a plane too high to admit of the possibility of any such vulgarity as jilting! A girl always knows it when a man is going to propose to her and—"

"Oh, no, she doesn't, Georgiana. I have often thought a man was going to propose to me—and he didn't."

"Father told me," continued Georgiana, scarcely heeding Daisy's flighty interpolations, "that it was a comfort to know that I was not capable of the weakness of such infatuation, and that my self-poise would always save me from making that kind of a fool of myself."

"Well, I should think so!" exclaimed Daisy warmly. "Oh, won't he have to go 'way back and sit down when he falls in love with you! I can hardly wait until I see it!"

"Wouldn't it be-eh-well, amusing," Georgiana granted, clasping her shapely hands about

her knees and looking dreamy, "if after his adamantine front to all the other girls, he should thaw to me?"

("Very amusing indeed," thought Kinross.)

"Which of course he will," affirmed Daisy dogmatically, "for you're not like the other girls you're on a higher plane."

"And so is he," said Georgiana lucidly, accept-

ing Daisy's tribute complacently.

"Perhaps," Daisy reluctantly conceded, "but he must be perfectly horrid—a conceited *prig*—with all the girls flattering him so idiotically."

"We shall cure him of that," Georgiana smiled, her tone suggesting a proprietorship which Kinross couldn't help thinking a little gratuitous.

"Father considers him able," Georgiana went on. "But," she added, "I have heard him say of him that he had 'a sarcastic tongue.' Now sarcasm," she dogmatised, "is not the expression of a high plane of thought—and perhaps," she said earnestly, "I may be able to help him to see life more sweetly and sanely."

("Not if I have any influence with myself,"

was Kinross' mental comment.)

While they talked, Daisy had every now and then cast rather uneasy glances at Peter and Mrs. Morningstar and she now leaned down and said something in a lowered voice to Georgiana.

Georgiana shook her head and answered aloud, "You need not be afraid. Their plane is so far

below that of ourselves, Daisy, that they scarcely catch the sound of our voices when we speak, but if you feel any apprehensions——" Georgiana rose and shook out her skirts.

Daisy dropped her handful of gooseberries into Mrs. Morningstar's pan and the two girls strolled away.

Kinross' eyes followed them thoughtfully, with a sense of pleasure in the symmetry of Miss Ellery's shapely shoulders, straight back and long graceful movement.

"So she thinks she's going to bowl me over just as soon as I come within her range," he mused. "What will be the effect on her, I wonder, when she discovers she's been discussing me like that in my own presence? 'Their plane is so far below that of ourselves, Daisy, that they scarcely catch the sound of our voices when we speak."

A short laugh escaped him—which roused Mrs. Morningstar to speech.

"I make no doubt, Doc," she said, working busily while she talked, "that you kin understand them girls when they speak all them high words to each other; ain't? It beats me what they're conwersin' about together, still, when they speak so educated that way—just like readin' out of the newspaper or whatever."

"I think they don't always understand themselves, Mrs. Morningstar."

"Now think! Poll-parrots, too, they don't

know what they're sayin' neither. And educated people's the same!" she repeated in surprise.

Kinross at this moment caught a glimpse through the window of Eunice alone in the kitchen.

"Here's my chance," he thought, rising from

the porch steps.

"Say, Doc," Mrs. Morningstar stopped him, "if them girls ever finds out the joke you're playin' on 'em, pretendin' to be common like us when you're as tony as theirselves, I make no doubt they won't like it, Doc."

"I agree with you, Mrs. Morningstar. They won't like it."

"Supposin' they meet you in town there some time in your dude cloes!" she said apprehensively. "To be sure there's so many that lives in town, it ain't likely you will run acrost each other."

"It's not merely likely, Mrs. Morningstar.

They simply can't escape me."

"Not?" she cried. "Well, I guess you'll feel

pretty cheap!"

"It is they who will feel inexpensive, Mrs. Morningstar. They'll be ready to sell themselves for half price on the bargain counter!"

He left her to puzzle over the problem, as he

turned away and went into the kitchen.

But the moment's delay had lost him his chance. Eunice had left the room by one door just as he was entering by the other.

XIII

N the evening of that same day, Kinross, sitting on the grassy terrace by the front gate, contemplating the dusty highway, was still puzzling over the problem of Eunice.

"Were she the Sleeping Beauty in the Enchanted Castle, she couldn't be more inaccessible," was the conclusion to which he had come as, after seeing the whole family, including Eunice, go upstairs for the night, he had necessarily postponed his quest to the morrow.

"It looks as though I should be driven to communicate with her through correspondence even while here under the same roof with her!"

He was fairly wearied out with his speculations about her. For the first time, he now found his disguise irksome, so much would he have liked freely to discuss the case with Miss Ellery. Surely that philosophical young woman was not so abnormally self-engrossed as not to be curious, also, about Eunice. Perhaps if he gave her and Daisy an opportunity they would question him about the girl, thinking, of course, that he had known her long and intimately. It would be a relief, even

under the hampering condition of his assumed character, to talk her over with some one. How had her extraordinary talk of the night before struck Miss Ellery, anyway?

He had reached this point in his meditations when he was roused by the sound of a step behind him. All the family had gone to bed, so it must be the young ladies. They were coming to join him on the terrace.

"A mere farm-hand is after all a man," he shrugged.

But this evening he felt an unusual readiness to welcome their society.

"If I can't investigate Eunice myself, at least I can now get at the impression she has made on others."

He tossed away the cigar he was smoking—it was of the brand smoked by Miss Ellery's father and quite too choice to be found in the possession of a farm-hand. He hoped she wouldn't notice the aroma.

He turned around and looked up.

There before him, slim and pale in the starlight, stood Eunice, in the unexpectedness of her appearing, suggesting to his startled fancy a vision of a Fra Angelico angel.

His astonishment left no room even for a passing regret for the excellent cigar so unnecessarily sacrificed.

There was a mingled timidity and dignity in her manner that brought him to his feet with an instinctive chivalry.

"Will you sit down with me?" he asked in a tone of uncertainty, for he could not guess just why she had come—she had always appeared to shun and even to be afraid of him. There was just now a pained sensitiveness in her fine face that revealed the struggle she was having with herself in approaching him like this.

"But you would rather not be intruded upon—even by me?" she asked wistfully, her voice low and trembling. "I mean," she hastily explained, "I don't count of course—but perhaps you would rather be entirely alone?"

She had spoken so unhesitatingly last night to Miss Ellery—why should she falter like this, in such agony of embarrassment, when speaking to him? True, she had talked to Georgiana under stress of a sudden strong impulse—she had been caught unawares, as it were—that had been manifest enough. Still, in spite of his own life-long battle with shyness, he couldn't quite understand why any girl under the sun should be bashful with him. Certainly his experience with bashful girls had been limited—or rather, nil.

"Ever since last night," he said to her, "I have been looking for an opportunity to talk with you." He saw the colour flood her cheeks and her bosom rise and fall in a long, deep breath.

"You have wanted to talk with me?" she

breathed.

"It's the only thing I have wanted ever since last night."

"Since last night?"

Could it be possible that she didn't know she had given them, or at least him, a shock of surprise last night?

"Yes-since last night. Naturally."

"Is it," she asked, "that you are concerned in this controversy about Miss Ellery's frock?"

"No," he repressed a smile, "it is not about Miss Ellery's frock I wanted to talk to

you."

It was evident that the episode of the "frock" had been, to her mind, the only notable one of the previous evening.

"Let us sit down," he repeated.

Her face lighted up as she obeyed him, with a brightness that transformed it. He marvelled why she should in one moment shrink from him and falter in painful shyness, and the next be radiant with pleasure. To him the reason for the transformation was not apparent.

"What made you say you 'don't count'?" he began as he seated himself beside her.

"You said so—that evening—by the fence."

"When I said you didn't 'annoy' me? But I didn't mean that!"

"What did you mean then?" The question seemed to spring from her without her volition.

What had he meant indeed?

"I suppose," he speculated, "I meant that you interest me too much to annoy me."

"And the young ladies—you avoid them because they don't interest you?"

Was there a note of eagerness in her wistful voice? And to think that she should volunteer to ask him questions! If he could make her feel more at ease with him, perhaps he could get her to talk to him of herself. His pulse bounded with pleasure in anticipation of his quest of her secret and he felt a thrill of satisfaction in his present isolation with her.

"I can't say they don't interest me. Everybody interests me. Even Ollie. Even Abe!"

He looked at her narrowly as he spoke her lover's name with this intimation of his insignificance. He could not see whether or not it disturbed her.

"But," he went on, "there are degrees of interest. None of them have a mystery about them."

Her face as she listened to him expressed anxious attention, like one who tries to follow a foreign tongue; and she seemed to weigh, for a moment, all that he said before she answered.

"But neither have I a mystery about me," she replied wonderingly. "A mystery?"

"Haven't you?" he questioned gravely, in the

tone of one reproving a child for telling a fib.

"Indeed, no," she shook her head in denial of such an accusation. "I haven't."

"No? I'm surprised to hear it. For, do you know, you seem to me the most mysterious young person I ever met!"

"I do?" she marvelled. "But why?"

In her astonishment she was forgetting her shyness. "Unless," she attempted to explain it, "you find me mysterious because I am so simple. If all the young ladies you know are complex like Miss Ellery—"

"Heaven forbid!"

"Don't you like her?" she asked, again with that note of wistfulness, which this time included

an accent of pity for Miss Ellery.

"I love her!" he declared, with a whimsical exaggeration that he hoped would dispose of Miss Ellery finally. "That's why I wouldn't have all the young ladies I know made after her pattern, you see."

She started at his words, and suddenly the radiance seemed to die out of her face, leaving it mournful.

"You-you love her!" she said falteringly.

"Of course I love her! The difference between

you and Miss Ellery," he went on, following the idea in his own mind, and not seeing, in the dimness, the pallid hopelessness that had come to her face, "is that Miss Ellery thinks she's complex, but isn't, and you think you're simple, but aren't. And the most mysterious thing about you is that you hadn't noticed it yourself—that you were mysterious, I mean. I don't see how it escaped you."

She did not answer him.

"For instance, why are you so different from Ollie when you two have had the same rearing?"

She swallowed hard and seemed to make an effort to speak to him.

"Is that a mystery?" she said. "But it is easily explained. We are not of the same parentage."

"Do you know anything of your own

parents?"

There was a scarcely perceptible hesitation before she answered.

"No." Her voice sounded remote, as though

she shrank from his questioning.

"That in itself is strange, isn't it?" he ventured, hesitating to force his investigations against her evident reluctance, but his keen curiosity getting the better of his finer feeling.

"I suppose it is," she answered, her voice sub-

dued, her eyes downcast.

"Do Mr. and Mrs. Morningstar know nothing about your parents?"

"I don't know."

"But have you never asked them?"

"I have never discussed it with them."

His questions agitated her, he saw—and he didn't believe she was being candid with him; so he reluctantly dropped them. He remained silent to give her a chance to tell him why she sought him here at an hour when all the rest of the family were abed.

"I want to ask you," she began timidly, "to tell me something—if you are quite willing to spare your time to me."

The occasional unusualness of her mode of expression struck him as touching of foreignness. Here was another phase of the mystery of her.

"I couldn't make better use of my time," he answered. "Ask me anything you like, child."

The kindness of his tone as he called her "child," made her eyes grow suddenly misty, so novel it was to hear herself spoken to as though she were not a chattel or a slave. Her voice, as she answered him, was very low and sweet.

"I am anxious to have you tell me whether a girl like me could find a place out in the world where she could earn her living?"

It was to ask him this that she had come to him to-night. But would it not have been a more natural thing for her to have gone to Georgiana or Daisy with such an inquiry? He wondered why she had chosen to ask him in preference to them.

"It depends upon the sort of place you would want. Some sorts of work are easy to secure. Others are not. What kind of work do you mean?"

"That's what I hoped you could tell me—the sort of work there is in town whereby a girl like me could earn her living?"

"Domestic service?" he hesitatingly suggested. But somehow, in spite of her servitude to the farmer's family, this struck him as utterly incongruous. "Places for domestic service can be secured easily—almost on your own terms. But—if you are thinking of some other sort of occupation—"

He paused questioningly; but she said nothing. Only her repressed eagerness urged him on.

"I should have to know more about you before I could judge of your chances."

Again he paused; but she remained silent.

"If you will tell me something of yourself?" he suggested.

She looked surprised. "But there is nothing to tell of me more than what you yourself have seen."

He looked at her with searching eyes. "Isn't there?"

"No," she answered with a frankness that ought to have carried conviction.

"Could you do any other sort of work than what I have seen you do—sewing and housework?"

"I don't know. What other things are done by

women?"

"Well, there are shop-girls, stenographers, milliners, bookkeepers, teachers—" he turned and again looked at her keenly. "Would you like to teach?" he asked abruptly.

"But I haven't an education."

- "Just how much schooling have you had?"
- "I was taken out of school when I was twelve years old."
- "And have had no instruction of any sort since then?"

" No."

- "And have never been off the farm?"
- "Never except the few times that I have been in town to the market for a half day."

"Then, Eunice," he inquired with impressive earnestness, "may I ask how you happen to speak a language so unlike that of the Morningstars?"

He watched her closely as he put the question. Her face, so near to him, gleamed like ivory in the starlight and he could plainly see her countenance. His question brought a startled look to her eyes and again he saw her bosom rise in a long deep breath. She did not attempt to answer him.

"Well?" he pressed his inquiry with a tense interest.

"I—I didn't realise that it was noticeable—my not speaking as the rest speak," she faltered.

"And how does it come that you don't speak as

'the rest' speak?"

"I—never thought about it. If I have come to speak like the—differently from the rest of the

family, it has been unconsciously."

"Ah?" he commented thoughtfully. "Remarkable! Remarkable—that you should make use of a vocabulary that you have never heard spoken. Have you, possibly, come unconsciously to a speaking acquaintance, also, with French and German?"

"I should think that must be an impossibility to come unconsciously to a knowledge of a foreign tongue," she answered seriously, evidently unused at least to the language of sarcasm.

"Not more so than what you would have me believe—that with no schooling after your twelfth

believe—that with no schooling after your twelfth year and with no environment or association except that of this farmer's family, you should—well, to go no further—be acquainted with areas of the English language which would be as foreign to the rest of this household as Italian or Spanish. Now then, how do you account for it?"

The little pucker in her brow indicated to him how his inquisitiveness troubled her. She turned to him with anxious appeal in her eyes. "Is it necessary to account for it—before you can advise me?"

"Yes, it is," he stubbornly persisted. "The more I know about you the better I can help you."

She dropped her eyes and did not at once answer. But presently, with evident great reluctance, she spoke. "If I talk in a more educated way than the rest of the family, it is only because I have read a

few books-that came in my way."

"I should think very few books indeed would come in your way on this farm?" He put it questioningly. "I have never seen you so much as look at my books when they have been lying about. What books ever come in your way? Mrs. Morningstar says this is the first summer she has taken boarders since she gave up keeping a hotel, twentyone years ago. And when, in God's name, do you get time to read, when even a chance newspaper has to be read surreptitiously, between trips to the spring-house for food! Look here! I heard you say last night that old Morningstar wouldn't let you read anything but the Bible on Sunday and that that day was the only time you had to read at all—and you declined Miss Ellery's offer of books!"

The troubled pucker in her brow deepened, her chin quivered, and he had the alarm of thinking she was going to cry, when to his astonishment, a little ripple of laughter broke from her. He had never seen her even smile and he would as soon have looked for a laugh from a Mater Dolorosa. He was sure that Balaam was not more dumb-

founded when his ass waxed conversational than he was to hear this girl laugh. Somehow, the bare idea of laughter was eliminated from the impression one gathered of her from day to day. But then no two things about her did fit together.

"I suppose there is a joke somewhere in this mix-up," he said thoughtfully, "but it's cryptic to

me! "

"Now," he told himself, "if that word cryptic' isn't too much for her—"

"I should think your own joke wouldn't be

cryptic to you."

"Eunice," he patiently argued, "put it to yourself. Would Ollie know what I was talking of if I spoke to her of 'a cryptic joke'? Yet I understand she had five more years of schooling than you had." He suddenly leant towards her, a rare gentleness in his tone; "Come; trust me; explain yourself to me."

Again his tone of kindness flooded her face with colour and light. He thought he read in her eyes an inward struggle between a longing to take him into her confidence and a fear of trusting him so far. That she had something to conceal seemed to him certain. The strangeness of it was emphasised by the fact that nothing could be more simple and open than the life of the Morningstar family.

"So this," she said softly, "is the mystery you

find about me?"

"Well? Isn't it a mystery?"

"The explanation is so very simple."

"I should like to hear it."

Again she dropped her eyes and hesitated.

"There is nothing to explain," she said at last, "further than what I have told you, Dr. Kinross; I have read a few books—which I have come by."

"Do you mind telling me how you 'came by'

them?"

"It was-it is-quite by accident."

Suddenly she made a movement to rise from the ground, as though to flee from his further questioning. But he instantly checked her. The dismay he felt at the thought of her going away fairly startled him. He was astonished, also, to find that for the first time in his life he was talking to a young girl with an instinctive ease and naturalness. He could not stop now to analyse it.

"I won't ask you another question—if I can help it. Believe me, I haven't meant to press your confidence in mere curiosity—but in my wish to help you-though I won't pretend that you have not made me extremely curious about yourself too. But now-about finding employment for you in town. Would you really make the break with these people here and go to the city if you could get a position there?"

The colour that had come to her cheeks faded out, leaving them white. She looked grave, almost solemn, as she answered him. "I have weighed it—and have talked with Abe, who assures me that, being of age, I am free. My ignorance of the world makes me fearful to go out into it—but I have come to feel of late that nothing which I may encounter in any other mode of existence will be more unbearable to me than my life here. And so," she concluded, her eyes drooping and her voice sinking to a lower key, "I have decided that I will go away."

"Isn't it rather singular," he said, "that Abe should sanction and even urge your going away—

he of all persons!"

"But he does not. He knows nothing of my determination." A startled look came into her face. "You will not tell him," she breathed anxiously.

"I! Well, hardly! But you say it is he who tells

you you are free to leave here."

"He tells me I am free—not to go to town, he never dreams of my doing that—but free to marry him."

"Which you will eventually do? There! Pardon me—I promised to ask you no more questions! Now, as to these Morningstars—of course there will be a row when they find you are going. Can you stand up against it?"

"It will be wearisome," she sighed. "But I

shall not falter."

"You are sure you won't weaken when old Morningstar gets at you?"

"I am sure," she said quietly.

"He won't easily let you go, you know. You save money for the old skinflint. To spare yourself a struggle with him, why not get away secretly and let him fight it out with himself after you are gone?"

"I have considered that way of leaving—but I have decided against it. I prefer to leave openly. But more than Mr. Morningstar I fear Abe."

"I would think so," he agreed. He wondered whether this signified that she did or did not reciprocate Abe's devotion. It might be interpreted either way. Her caring for Abe was not more incongruous than some other things about her. Suddenly he decided to tell her what it was her undoubted right to know—that Hen Mucklehenny's visits were for her, not Ollie. It would be interesting, also, to see how she would take it. Would it prove a pleasant surprise to her?

"Perhaps your problem may be solved in an easier way than your going to town to earn your living. I'll tell you something. Hen Mucklehenny's visits here have been meant for you, not Ollie. He wants to 'keep company' with you. Perhaps knowing this, you may reconsider your purpose to go to town?"

The information made, apparently, very little

impression on her—except to bring to her face a strange look of weariness and sadness.

"Did Hen tell you," she asked in a spiritless voice, "that he wanted to come to see me?"

He observed that she did not say "keep comp'ny." He wondered why the brightness had so suddenly gone out of her at the mention of Hen.

"No," he said, "I overheard him telling old

Morningstar. I have meant to tell you."

"I've known it," she answered in an uninterested tone. "He writes verses to me."

"Verses! Hen Mucklehenny!"

"Yes. I find them sticking in the door of the spring-house with a bunch of wood violets pinned to them."

"They don't appear to have moved you—the violets and the verses. Are the verses original?"

"You may judge." She drew a sheet of paper from her pocket. "I found these this evening. But you can't read them in this light."

He took a box of matches from his pocket, struck one and read aloud from the sheet of paper she held out to him:

"'I give to you this wiolet
In token that we two have met,
And hope that we already yet
Once more again together get.""

He turned and looked at her. No wonder she looked weary and sad!

"I would not like to trouble you with commissions," she said, "but if I may ask a favour of you—you are always so kind to me——"

"I?" he said, surprised; "I kind to you?"

Her answer was spoken very low. "No one else has ever been so kind."

He was silent from astonishment. She was tearing up little blades of grass at her side with nervous fingers. He waited for her to go on. But she did not.

"The favour, Eunice?"

Her mournful eyes unveiled an instant and looked at him as he spoke her name—and again his pulse stirred as he met the soft fire of her look.

"If you should get an opportunity to speak to Hen, will you please tell him to guit it?"

"Quit writing poetry?"

"He will expose me to the wrath of Ollie and her father and mother, who have set their hearts on him."

"And you will not defy them and favour him? Or is it Abe that makes Hen's case so hopeless?"

She gazed at him, her mournfulness changed to utter despair. Was there, then, actually a real case of the heart and not of mere propinquity, between her and Abe? Incredible!

Before he could answer, the faint sound of a step on the boardwalk near the house made him turn to glance over his shoulder.

"Talk of the Devil-"

Eunice sprang to her feet with the primitive instinct of a startled animal, gave one glance in the direction of the approaching footsteps on the boardwalk and without a word, darted away, around to the back of the building. Abe stopped short a few feet from the terrace, looking baffled at her disappearance. Then he shuffled up to Kinross.

He looked as though he had just got out of bed. His hair was towsled, his feet were bare and he wore neither coat nor waistcoat.

"Say! That there was our Eunice settin' alongside of you; ain't it was?" he demanded aggressively.

"Yes," Kinross curtly nodded, taking a fresh cigar from one pocket and a match from another. Abe had always been abashed in his presence, but his jealousy was evidently giving him unwonted courage. Kinross, feeling a pugilistic rage against him for having driven Eunice away, tingled to use his fists.

"What was she doin'?" demanded Abe in a tone of sullen suspicion.

"Doing? Nothing," Kinross responded, blowing a cloud of smoke from his mouth.

"What was she here fur then?"

"Because she chose to be, I suppose."

"She went up to bed when I did a'ready. What fur has she snuk down again?"

"I might ask the same question of you, Abe."

"I heerd her when she snuk downstairs. So I put some things on and follered her up."

"What for?"

- "I conceited I'd see what she was up to any-how."
- "Yes?" said Kinross in an absent tone, pushing back his hat and blowing up circles of smoke.
- "She come out here and set alongside of you," pursued Abe. "I seen her!"

"So did I."

"What fur did she want to do that there?" Abe angrily demanded.

"It was queer taste, Abe, wasn't it?"

- "She's my girl and you ain't to spoon with her!"
- "Go to bed, Abe," Kinross advised wearily.
- "I took notice she run off mighty quick when she heard me comin'," he said with dark suspicion.
- "Not very flattering to you, that's a fact," Kinross conceded.
- "Are you leavin' her be?" Abe threateningly asked.

Kinross took his cigar from his mouth and measured the bucolic youth before him with cold eyes which made the other's fall in embarrassment. Then, turning his back on him, he continued to smoke.

Abe scowled, hesitated, and finally, with evident reluctance, gave up the fight and slunk away, going slowly back to the house.

HEN Kinross opened his eyes the next morning it was with a sense of pleasure that gradually, as full consciousness came to him, assumed the form of a desire to continue his interrupted talk of the night before with Eunice. As he lay on his back, his hands clasped under his head, the impression he had received of the charm of the girl's personality, came back to him vividly. He complacently decided that he would take the first opportunity that day to see and talk with her once more.

But the day passed and the opportunity did not

present itself.

In the evening he betook himself to the terrace by the gate and sat waiting for her to come out to him. Not until his vigil had reached the hour of eleven, unrewarded, did he give it up.

"She's afraid of Abe," he decided, as with a keenness of disappointment that surprised himself, he went into the silent house and sought his bed.

The two following days left him still foiled of his purpose. It looked as though the girl herself tried to avoid him. This fact only aggravated his desire to renew his investigation of her. To defer it so long was like being obliged to wait a whole month for the next number of an interesting serial. There were so many things they had not talked out that night she had come to him. It remained yet to decide what employment she should take up in town.

Kinross had usually found that his interest in a woman was in an inverse ratio to his intimacy with her. The charm of mystery or elusiveness so quickly vanished on a closer view. But here was a case in which what at first had seemed a perfectly obvious character, grew more mysterious and therefore more interesting, each time she opened her lips.

As a diversion from his irritation at his continued failure to see her alone, he one day asked Mrs. Morningstar's permission to sleep, that night, in the haunted part of the house.

He was surprised at the effect his simple request produced. The farmer's wife turned white to the lips and trembled so that she had to pause in her clearing of the dinner table and sink into a chair.

"You couldn't hire me with dimons to go near there!" she gasped. "And I wouldn't be doin' right to leave you be so venturesome, if you don't know no better yourself."

He had lingered, after the rest had left the dinner table, to put his request, and he was alone with her. With his usual contempt for feminine logic, he would not waste time in reasoning with her on the point at issue, but at once put to her the one argument which he knew could scarcely fail to convince her. "I'll pay a dollar extra board this week for the privilege," he said. Delicacy in dealing with Mrs. Morningstar would have been casting pearls.

"What fur do you want to do somepin that dangerous?" she curiously inquired, weakening in her

resistance as he was sure she would.

"I never met a ghost. I'd find it interesting to make the acquaintance of one."

He suddenly started as he became aware of Georgiana's presence in the kitchen. She had come in at the door behind him and had walked into the room before he saw her. He cast a hasty glance upon her to find evidence of her having overheard his remark, delivered in his natural tone and language and not in that of his assumed character.

But Georgiana was not observant. She gave no sign of having heard him, as fanning her heated face, she languidly rested on the big wooden settee. Daisy followed and sat down beside her.

"We've decided it's too hot, just now at noon, to walk over to the woods; we're going to bed until it's cooler," Georgiana announced. "Why what's the matter, Mrs. Morningstar?" she asked, for the landlady still looked pale, in spite of the proffered extra dollar.

"Are you and Pete having a row?" asked

Daisy with relish, flinging a greasy cushion off the settee to a chair across the room.

"Och, me and Doc we're havin' a debate. He wants fur to sleep in the haunted room oncet! I ain't in fur it much. But," she said doubtfully, "I guess I must give in too, seein' he's promised a extry dollar on his board fur the chanct."

The girls stared, puzzled, and Kinross had a look of being cornered. But even in his annoyance at such a "give away," the added loveliness of Georgiana's face in its rare self-forgetfulness under her momentary surprise, was not lost upon him.

"Board? Does he pay board?" asked Daisy, half reaching for her note-book. "A farm-hand isn't boarded?"

Mrs. Morningstar was confused. "Och, Doc," she stammered, "how's a body to answer 'em? Well, to be sure," she added, becoming resourceful, "a farm-hand's board is counted as part pay."

"How fine of you, Peter," said Georgiana enthusiastically, "to rise above this sordid, superstitious fear! Your spirit of inquiry, too, is fine! I am glad you are undertaking to do this, Peter. I believe we can rise to a plane where fear is entirely eliminated."

"There's a mouse!" remarked Peter experimentally, pointing under the settee—and simultaneously the two girls, with genteelly repressed shrieks, sprang to their feet.

"It ain't no such a thing!" Mrs. Morningstar indignantly denied the reflection on her house-keeping. "It ain't no mices in my house! A mousey house—that there I don't have!"

Daisy, holding her skirts high enough to reveal her pretty ankles and dainty shoes, and Georgiana, trembling, stood out in the middle of the room.

"Is mice eliminated from that there plane you referred to, Missus?" Pete inquired.

Georgiana's smile was wan. "Do you mean to be facetious, Peter?"

"Supposin' the haunted room is—mousey?" he suggested.

"The mice are no doubt the only creatures that haunt the place," Georgiana answered, still holding high her skirts.

"You will find out if you try sleepin' there," Mrs. Morningstar warned them.

Daisy dropped her skirts after a cautious glance around her and took up her note-book. "What are the facts about the case?" she asked with a lawyer-like eye upon Mrs. Morningstar. "I'm awfully stuck on psychic phenomena."

"I don't know right what you mean," Mrs. Morningstar hesitated. "Is it that you want to know what it makes in the haunted room?"

"Yes; what has been seen there, and by whom? And what is the story of the room? Usually there's

a romantic legend attached to a place believed to be haunted."

Mrs. Morningstar was usually garrulous enough and liked nothing better than to gossip of her own and her neighbours' affairs to an interested listener. But she did not seem to greet these questions with her usual readiness.

"It don't come easy to me to tell about what happened there, fur all I'm used to it fur some twenty years now. If Eunice wasn't workin' out with Pop and Abe this after, in the fields over, I'd change the subjec'," she said, using the phrase with a self-conscious air of employing elegant language; "for us we don't never talk anything before her about what happened upstairs there, it's near twenty-one years back a'ready. Eunice she was just a little over a year old."

She sat down to tell her story and Georgiana and Daisy returned to the settee, the latter with

her note-book open on her lap.

"We were keepin' hotel here and we had a many comers and goers. Here one day, a couple come, a man and his missus and their baby a year and a half old. They was tony people—that I must give 'em—and they had money a plenty. They sayed they'd stay a while, bein' as they liked my cookin', though to be sure, they didn't eat much, neither one of 'em. The missus was always wonderful pale and she never could fetch a smile. She was always settin' and thinkin,' starin' in front of herself and not no-

ticin' no person nor nothin'. She didn't seem to have no heart fur that baby of hern. She wouldn't mind, still, that it was settin' on her lap and she'd near leave it slip off. Him and her often had words up in their rooms. They rented two rooms off of us and they furnished 'em grand, with such a bookcase and writin'-desk and a bedroom suit. Me and Pop us we used to listen outside in the hall, still. We couldn't hear what they sayed much, but him, he'd scold in a low woice and her, she'd cry faintlike, so's no one would hear. The Mister he used to go in town frequent, if not oftener, and I used to tell Pop, still, 'You mind if some day he don't come back no more. I kin see it at him how he's tired of her yet. Yes, he'll go off and leave her with that child to keep, now you see oncet if he don't,' I sayed to Pop."

"The child was Eunice, I suppose?"

In his interest in her narrative, not merely for itself, but for any light it might throw upon Eunice, Kinross forgot to be "Pete" and leaned forward across the table, regarding Mrs. Morningstar with a thoughtful frown. The sound of his own voice brought him back to himself and he again glanced with apprehension at the girls. But they, too, were so interested in the story, that even the fact of the farm-hand's idling in the kitchen while his employer and Eunice worked in the fields, escaped their notice.

"Yes, it was our Eunice," Mrs. Morningstar

answered, "but that don't come in yet—I mustn't get ahead of my story. Oncet, when I could hear they was scrappin', I peeped in the key-hole. Not that I wanted to be inquisitive; but a body likes to know, too, what's goin' on in their own hotel. Well, that there woman could have easy got a divorce cheap, if she'd of just brang up some remarks where he made."

"What remarks?" inquired Kinross.

"Why," she exclaimed, "he run at her with a razor!"

"Remarks?" he questioned hazily.

"And me, I hollered and run. And it was just the next night the crime was commit. It was the twenty-seventh of July. We was called to the room by the screamin' of the little baby and we had to break the lock—and there we found the woman dead in her bed, lyin' in a pool of blood, and the man he had flew! There was a envelope pinned to the baby with some money in it. We conceited it was meant fur to pay any one where would keep the child. Well, us we didn't give no one else the chancet—me and Pop we took the money and kep' the child."

"How much money was there?" inquired Kinross.

"That ain't neither here nor there," she answered curtly, colouring and looking uncomfortable. "It wasn't so wonderful much, considerin'

all the trouble we had to take, raisin' the child, and the trouble we're havin' now," she added vindictively, "with her runnin' after our Abe the way she's doin'. To be sure," she conceded, "we didn't raise her the way her mother was raisin' her. I never did see a baby tended the way she done -a clean white dress every day-now mind! Yes, indeed! Oh, that baby mustn't never get dirty when her mother had her! She must be clean all the time—and get washed all over every day, mind you, 'stead of oncet a week like us country people does to our babies. Then she practised this here hy-geen on it—she must scald the milk to foomgate the germs or whatever, and wash her mouth and eyes with borax water! You wouldn't believe anybody'd be that dumm, to take all that there trouble, would you? But that there's hy-geen. I hear lots of towners believes in this here hy-geen. Well, after we found the dead corp in there, I wouldn't do it to sleep at the hotel till after the funeral was. I slep' to the neighbours'. The news of the crime got put out all over the county and we had a wonderful big funeral! But not one mourner!" she added in a shocked tone. "Not one crape weil! When there ain't no crape weils, it don't remind me of a funeral, ain't not? Well, the preacher he had a wonderful solemn sermont! There was two or three sayed to me afterwards how they felt under his sermont—and one sayed how she liked to hear a solemn preachin' like hisn on a funeral so that her heart gets affected.

"As a general, I kin stand a good bit; I don't soon go to bed sick; but that there crime sent me to bed fur near a week, with all the work layin'. Pop he was so much fur tellin' all about it to comers and goers and it would work me up so to hear him come over it all, that I used to wish we didn't keep hotel, so's there wouldn't be no comers and goers to tell it to."

She paused to take breath, but Kinross was ready with a question to urge her on.

"How do you know that it was not a case of suicide rather than murder?"

"The coroner's jury," replied Mrs. Morningstar, "sayed she didn't suocode herself, but was murdered in the first degree."

"It is the murdered woman who haunts the room?"

"I don't know," she answered, turning white again. "I ain't never slep' there. Oncet, before we quit hotellin' and begun farmin' this here place, we slep' a travellin' man in that there room and about the middle of the night he waked us all with runnin' through the hall, screechin' he'd saw a ghost! And after that we never put no one in there no more. Their furniture is all there yet too. The neighbours tells us that near every night any person passin' our place late kin see a queer light in

the winder of that there room. Our Abe seen it oncet too."

"Peter," Daisy turned eagerly to Kinross, "are you husky enough to sleep in that room? If you are, you'll tell us about the ghost, won't you, to-morrow morning—if you meet her?"

"Ain't you got afraid to sleep there now, Doc—Pete—after what I tole you yet?" Mrs. Morning-

star asked incredulously.

"I'll tell you to-morrow morning," answered Kinross. "May be I'll cut and run, too, like the travelling man. You never can tell what you'll do

when you're up against a ghost!"

"Say!" Mrs. Morningstar suddenly exclaimed, her eyes moving from one to another of her list-eners with an anxiety amounting to distress, "look at here! Yous won't speak nothin' to Eunice, will yous, about this here? Us we always kep' it from her. It would be ugly to tell her her Pop murdered her Mom in the first degree!"

"And," thought Kinross, "that her father left

a sum of money for her support."

"Doesn't she ever ask questions about herself?" inquired Daisy. "If I were she, it wouldn't take me long to get aboard!"

"There fur a while she did," Mrs. Morningstar said. "But us we put her off with just tellin' her her parents left her here a waif."

"If the whole neighbourhood knew of it, I don't

see how you've kept it from her," remarked Georgiana. "Surely some one would be apt to tell her."

"We never let her go much. We kep' her close at home, just so's she wouldn't hear nothin'. We

thought it would be so upsettin'."

"To learn how she's been slaving for her living which probably had been paid for," thought Kinross.

"I don' know what's made me speak all this here to you," Mrs. Morningstar continued with increasing anxiety in her face and voice. "I don' often come over it. I don' like to. But I was took back so with Doc's—Pete's—astin' fur the dare to sleep in that there room, that the whole thing come out before I knowed right I was tellin' it. And now mebbe yous will tell Eunice!"

Kinross, who was watching the woman attentively, was sure that, judging from her habitual treatment of Eunice, her present intense apprehension was certainly not due to the cause to which she attributed it—tender compassion for the girl. She was evidently holding back something which if known would compromise her. What could it be? He was pretty sure that in spite of their greed, neither Mr. nor Mrs. Morningstar would be deliberately dishonest. The Pennsylvania German, however "close," usually has integrity, if for no other reason than because of his fear of hell.

"Perhaps," he reflected, "Eunice herself-con-

tradictory and unaccountable as she is in so many respects—knows more about herself than any one suspects."

His lukewarm desire to investigate the haunted room had increased, with his knowledge of its history, to a keen eagerness to get at it and he determined that that very night should find him in the shut-off quarter of the house.

Mrs. Morningstar was now summoned from the room by Ollie's calling to her to "come lay over the dough."

"Gracious!" cried Daisy, making a note in her book as the landlady departed reluctantly, "she's going to 'lay over the dough'! No more bread for mine!" EN o'clock that night found Kinross in the haunted bed-chamber. He had come to the room without further permission from Mrs. Morningstar than the reluctant half-consent he had extracted from her at noon. The subject had not been broached between them again, so he had taken the law into his own hands and soon after the family retired, he carried his kerosene lamp down the long corridor, which cut off the "haunted" part from the rest of the house, and reached the fatal room.

He was relieved to find that the door was not locked. Once across the threshold, he did not even glance about him until he had carefully closed the door behind him. Then turning, he raised high his lamp.

The ghost herself, if she appeared in the course of his vigil, would not give him a greater shock of surprise than he received as his eye fell upon the opposite wall of the room; the last thing he would have expected to find in the vicinity of the Morningstar farm confronted him—a bookcase filled with books, a little library of classics—for even

across the width of the room he could read the giltlettered names, Shakspere, Milton, Spenser, Eliot, Browning, and the rest.

The rest of the room—a bed-chamber furnished in handsome old mahogany—was not in any way noteworthy, save that there was something in its general aspect which seemed to give evidence of a higher grade of people than the Morningstars. There was nothing sufficiently gruesome about it, at least in the matter of its appointments, to suggest either a murder or a ghost. True, he felt an atmosphere of uncanniness about the place, hard to account for except on the theory that his imagination, filled with the account of the deed of horror these walls had witnessed, coloured the room with all the sombreness of the tale.

He walked across the floor and, placing his lamp on the top of a low shelf, plunged into an examination of the book-shelves.

There were the novels of Scott, Dumas, Dickens, Thackeray, George Eliot and Charlotte Brontë; the Tales of Poe; Macaulay's England; Gibbon's Rome; Carlyle's French Revolution; the plays of Shakspere; many of the modern English and American poets; the works of Spenser, Milton and Pope; the Canterbury Tales and Johnson's Lives of the Poets.

Taking down a volume at random, he had a vague instinctive surprise at finding no dust on it.

The fact had no definite significance at the moment, but later, in the light of other developments, he recalled the circumstance.

He had soon made a mental inventory of the lower shelves. The books were in good condition, though they showed signs of having been handled considerably.

"The parents of Eunice were at least not illiterate," he concluded.

He now turned his attention to the top-most row of books which was out of his reach. It consisted of a set of Balzac. He mounted a chair and taking down a volume, was a little surprised to find that it was a French edition. The book was thick with dust and its removal from the shelf had sent a little cloud of dust into his eyes. He had a passing wonder in the fact that the top shelf alone was dusty.

"Perhaps the ghost can't read French, but en-

joys the English classics!"

He turned the pages of the Balzac. It, too, however, showed signs of having been read, for it bore

several marked passages.

Suddenly, as he turned a leaf, his eye fell upon—not a printed page—but a sheet of letter-paper, yellow with age, closely covered with a feminine hand-writing. He turned towards his lamp and read:

"A CONFESSION.

"I, Beatrice Daniels, make the following confession in the face of imminent death, being unable longer to live and bear the burden of my crime. My husband threatens to murder me if I confess our crime and I myself would choose death at my own hands rather than languish in a prison, which is the fate my confession would bring upon me if I lived to face it. Therefore when this paper is found and read, I shall be dead, either having taken my own life, or having been murdered.

"The child, Eunice . . ."

Kinross started as at this instant his ear was suddenly caught by a faint sound in the corridor without—the sound, he thought, of an approaching light step. In a moment he had blown out his light and stepped down from his chair, folding and thrusting the paper into his pocket as he did so. One quick glance about him, and he slipped behind the high head-board of the old-fashioned bed. There he waited, motionless, for the appearing of the spirit—or whatever it was that was coming—for the sound of approaching steps on the bare wooden floor of the hall was now quite unmistakable. It was not mice either. Of that he was sure, as with tense expectation he waited and listened. So there was actually some foundation for this story

of the ghost? Nonsense!—Old Morningstar was coming to warn him away from the room perhaps. No, the step was too light for this. Who or what would he see? Would It come into this room? If It did not, he would examine the hall.

He heard the latch of the door move and the door open and close very softly. The room was in absolute darkness, so of course he could see nothing. The light step came across the room to the foot of the bed, and then suddenly a match was struck (he had a hasty doubt as to whether ghosts ever found it necessary to use matches) and a faint light spread through the room.

A silence followed. There was no further movement, or sound of any sort. He waited, for what seemed to him a long time. At last he stooped and peeped through a crack in the head-board. His eyes were caught by the light of a candle burning on the wide top of the foot-board. And seated, Turk-fashion, on the bed, her cheeks planted on her palms, her elbows on an open volume on her lap, was a feminine figure—clad in a blue calico wrapper, with two thick braids of beautiful fair hair hanging over her shoulders. Eunice! For a moment he was bewildered. Questions and suppositions fairly jumped over each other in his brain. Whether she had learned of his coming to this room and had followed him thither; why she was not fearful of the place; whether she was walking in her sleep; whether she was Eunice or the spectre of Eunice's mother—

But gradually, as with strained muscles he continued to stoop and gaze at her, his confusion cleared to some definite impressions. She was sitting there reading, as composedly and quietly as though she were not more at home anywhere in the house than here in this room. She did not appear like one who had come for the first time into a haunted bed-chamber. And there was an indefinable something in her way of turning the page of a book which suggested in some subtle way that she was used to handling books and accustomed to reading much.

There was something in the girl's aspect, in her unconsciousness of an observer, in her relaxed and girlish form, in the childlike innocence and sweetness of her face, that thrilled Kinross with a sudden sense of a unique loveliness. His nerves tingled as he realised his isolation here to-night with this exquisite young creature.

He carefully raised himself from his stooping position and leaned against the wall. How was he to reveal himself without too greatly startling her? The shock or fright of suddenly beholding a man in the room when she supposed herself alone—at the hour of midnight too—might actually injure her. Yet he must not any longer leave her unaware of his presence.

The problem solved itself by his accidentally touching the head-board, at this moment, with his elbow. Instantly he thought to reassure her by quietly speaking her name, without abruptness.

"Eunice—it is only I—don't be alarmed."

He stepped out into sight as she spoke. She had sprung to her feet and stood panting with alarm, her eyes wide and startled, her cheeks white.

He spoke again in a matter-of-fact way, calculated to disarm her fear. "I'm very sorry I've frightened you. I came here to meet the ghost. Are you it?" he smiled.

She sank limply against the bed. "I thought,"

she breathed, "that you were it!"

At the sound of her own voice she seemed to recover herself. Her face was bright with colour now and her eyes were brilliant. He saw, almost with amusement, that she found no cause for alarm or displeasure at his presence.

He drew an old dusty chair to the bedside and

sat down before her, folding his arms.

She leaned comfortably against the foot of the bed. Evidently she saw no objection to a midnight chat with him. She seemed to him, in her innocent acceptance of the situation, as ignorant of evil as an angel.

There seemed so much that he wanted to ask her that he hardly knew where to begin. But with



She was sitting there reading



a trifle less than her usual timidity before him, she took the initiative.

"You were in this room when I came in—weren't you?" she asked, her eyes wide with wonder.

"Yes. In quest of the ghost."

"But the room was dark."

He pointed to his lamp on the book-shelf. "I blew it out when I heard you coming,—thinking I was going to encounter the spectre."

"You didn't know—did you—that you would

-would find me here to-night?"

Again that note of wistfulness with which he was beginning to grow familiar.

"No more expected it than I expected to meet

the Czar of Russia."

She appeared so disappointed to hear it that he hastened to add, "It's the most delightful surprise I ever had in my life."

She beamed upon him frankly. "You are pleased?" Evidently she wanted him to repeat it.

"To say I am 'pleased' would be false. I am overjoyed!"

"Why?"

He was much entertained at her venturing to put him through a catechism.

"How can you ask when for four days you have made it impossible for me to have three minutes' talk with you?" "You have wanted to talk with me?"

Her eyes were not mournful now, but luminous with happiness.

"Haven't you wanted to talk to me?" he in-

quired.

"Oh!" she breathed, as though her feelings were too deep for utterance.

Being a mere man, he found himself quite un-

able to interpret her.

"Much good it does me to want to talk to you," he said ruefully, "when I have to search you out in a haunted room at midnight in order to do it! Why do you make it so difficult?"

"I have not meant to make it difficult—Oh, no, indeed! But you know I am kept very closely at

work."

"I know. But why haven't you come out to me in the evenings—to the spring-house or to the terrace by the gate?"

"I think," she said, her colour deepening and her eyes falling, "it wouldn't have been-maid-

enly."

"Well, then, at least you might be about somewhere where I could come to you."

"Abe keeps a jealous watch upon me," she said without looking up.

"Abe? Abe be hanged!"

"And then," she added, her head sinking a little lower, "I would not wish to obtrude myself

when all your mind must be occupied with-with

the girl you said you loved."

"What?" he asked puzzled. "Oh! You refer to the stately Georgiana?" He laughed. "Georgiana also be—blest, I should say. I tell you, Eunice, the one and only thing I have desired since I last talked with you, has been to go on with that talk."

"Let us go on with it now," she said, a deep contentment radiating from her at his words.

"All right." He relaxed and leaned back more comfortably in his own chair, resting his forehead on his fingers and looking as complacently satisfied as she did.

"But first," she said timidly, "I would ask a promise of you."

"Yes, Eunice?"

"Will you not betray to Mr. or Mrs. Morningstar that you saw me here?"

"Why don't you wish them to know?" he asked, feeling his complacency disturbed by her apparent cowardice.

"They would be very angry."

"Why need you care for that?"

"But they would stop my coming in the future. I have kept them from knowing these many years."

"These many years? You have been in the habit of coming to this room?"

"Every night for many years."

"Aha!" he exclaimed, "then you are the ghost! The flickering light seen at the windows by passers-by is your candle!"

" Yes."

"What did you come for?"

"To read."

He sat upright in his chair. "For many years you have been reading the books in this room?"

" Yes."

He stared at her for an instant, spellbound with astonishment. Then he sank back again in his chair, fitting together the tips of his fingers, a habit of his when trying to think things out.

"I see," he said slowly. "I see."

He asked her a question abruptly. "Why would the Morningstars stop it if they knew?"

"They would think it made me less strong to work for them—staying up at night. You will not tell them?" she repeated anxiously.

"Of course I shall not tell—that goes without saying, child. But," he asked curiously, "were you never afraid to come here—knowing the place was supposed to be haunted?"

"I had great fear. But my longing to read the

books was even greater."

"Your refusal to tell me the other evening how you 'came by' the 'few books' you had read—you were afraid I might betray you?"

"Always the great dread has been upon me of

having this only pleasant thing in my life taken away from me. It has made me cautious. But I would trust you now," she said with a restrained eagerness, "with any secret I had—I would trust you to—to the uttermost!"

"Thank you, Eunice," he answered gravely, an odd feeling of pleasure stirring in his heart.

He drew himself up and leaned toward the bookcase, examining in the light of his new knowledge, their titles.

"So then it has been your secret reading that has made of you such an anomaly in the midst of these Morningstars! Living among them, but never of them, your real life has been spent in the world of fiction and history and poetry. Yes," he nodded, "I begin to see daylight now."

As a psychologist, he felt an almost exciting interest in her as a case to be studied—with her peculiar mental equipment of a really extensive knowledge of literature combined with an absolute ignorance of actual life, and the affectional and emotional side of her nature left utterly dormant.

"Will you tell me," she timidly urged, "whether you have been told the story of this room? I know there is a story connected with it, but it has always been kept from me."

Although Kinross held it to be an old-fogy notion that a girl should be guarded from all knowledge of evil, yet he had an instinctive aversion to

pouring into the ears of this child-like maiden the story of the crime which Mrs. Morningstar had related to him.

On second thoughts, however, why should he hesitate, when she had nerves steady enough to meet a ghost? And a will so firm that in all these years she had kept the secret of her surreptitious reading, unconsciously educating herself thereby, possibly far beyond what many a girl gained from a systematic schooling. Surely the girl had "race" back of her, with her courage to face a ghost, her love of books so strong as to overcome obstacles that would have daunted any ordinary character, and her native refinement of thought and instinct which he felt in her presence so keenly.

But he bethought him of another reason why he did not wish to repeat to her at once Mrs. Morningstar's tale. There was the paper he had thrust into his pocket, at the sound of her step in the hall, bearing that "Confession." Until he had read that, he would rather tell her nothing.

"Will you wait," he begged her, "and let me think it over first before I tell you what I know? Believe me," he added as he saw her look of disappointment, "that I hold your welfare sacred and that in asking you to wait, I do what seems to me to be for your good."

He was surprised at the glow which irradiated her countenance at his words. She was so unused to being considered, he reflected, that a mere tone of kindness called forth all the latent brightness of her soul. Little did he dream how his words sang in her ears, "I hold your welfare sacred,"—and that the music of the spheres could not have seemed to her more wonderful—in spite of the fact that since that night on the terrace her heart had been heavy with the knowledge that he loved Georgiana.

"I will wait," she said, an unwonted thrill in her voice, that held him with its spell, "until you

are ready to tell me."

A disturbing possibility had suddenly occurred to him. Surely, if that "Confession" amounted to anything, Eunice would herself have found it out. He had supposed that he had come upon a discovery and he felt a pang of disappointment as he realised the probability of his having been mistaken.

"Those books on the top shelf—those Balzacs," he suddenly said, "they were the only books I found dusty. Ah, of course!" he added, "you don't read French, that's it!"

Then perhaps, after all, she had never seen this paper in his breast pocket. Extraordinary, indeed, if during all these years the secret of her history should have thus been within her reach and yet escaped her. A desire came to him to take it out and read it with her—but he thought better of it.

"You know nothing, really, of yourself—your name, your origin, your life before you were left here with the Morningstars?"

A pensive droop to her lips as she shook her head was her answer. After a moment, she looked up at him, her eyes almost solemn as she spoke. "You say it is for my good that you withhold, for the time, what you know of this room. Is it, then, as I have often suspected, bound up in some way with my life?"

He hesitated an instant. "Let us not speak of it just yet, Eunice."

"Very well," she acquiesced gently.

"I have so often wished," she added, "that if inanimate things can really take on impressions from the lives of the people that use them and afterwards give out those impressions,—that this place would speak to me of its history!"

It was not to be wondered at that her ideas were thus fantastic, he thought. The effect of her desultory reading, upon one who lived a life as isolated from the world as a nun's, and whose mind was left undisciplined by any other mental exercise, was so curious as to be almost phenomenal.

"But do you know how soon you can tell me?"

she asked.

"Probably the next time we can be alone together. And don't let it be a week from now! When and where shall it be?" "In this room to-morrow night?" she sug-

gested.

"Can't you come to me on the terrace again?" he proposed, quite unwilling to expose her to the scandal which must arise if they were found alone in this chamber in the small hours of the night.

"We would not be interrupted or in any way disturbed here," she said, her clear eyes so innocent of any impropriety in her proposal that he would no more have suggested it to her than he would have offered poison to a babe.

"You know," she added, "they all have great fear of this part of the house. On the terrace we might be seen. Abe——"

She stopped short as though to ward off an anathema upon Abe.

But Kinross realised that perhaps she was right. They ran little or no risk of interruption in this room.

"Let us meet here, then, to-morrow night and I will tell you what I can."

He was conscious of the fact that in the course of their talk she had seemed to him like one roused out of a long torpor; like a drooping wild flower reviving under a soft rain.

"Do you know, Eunice, it isn't true—what you told me the other night—that you 'have no education.' You have read and—I have reason to believe—assimilated the best of English letters."

"You call me educated?" she asked with interest.

"Technically, an educated person is no doubt one who knows the multiplication tables. I am not sure that you do."

She shook her head sadly. "No," she humbly

acknowledged. "And I can't spell either."

"Your education is dreadfully one-sided," he said, smiling. "But take comfort. This is the day for specialties. I believe that your knowledge of English, at least, is rather thorough."

"Would it serve me in supporting myself?"

she eagerly asked.

"Surely. The wonder to me is that you have not, through some occult process, learned to read those Balzacs!"

She looked at him doubtfully.

"You never even glanced into them?"

"Long ago I used to take one down occasionally and wish I could read it."

Had it been fortunate or unfortunate for her, he wondered, that she had missed this "Confession" in his pocket? That remained to be seen and he was eager to be alone in his room to read it. He felt a reluctance to bringing this interesting tete-a-tete to an end, but he must, without delay, be alone to read the secret in his pocket. He rose from his chair.

"It's getting awfully late, Eunice. I'd better go

now. We will meet here to-morrow night then? At what time?"

"I can come as soon as Ollie falls asleep. She was restless to-night and it made me late. She is usually quiet by half-past eight at the latest."

"I shall be waiting for you here at that time. And now, I think you'd better get some rest and

not stop here to read."

He held out his hand to her. "Good-night."

Without rising from the bed, she laid her slim fingers in his and he clasped them for an instant, as he looked down into her eyes upraised to his. There was something in her passionate gaze, "pure as very fire," which set his own pulse to bounding and which made him feel, for the first time in her presence, the full force of a fascinating personality—the charm of a most sweet womanhood.

He clasped her hand almost fiercely—then turned away abruptly and went from the room.

XVI

SEATED on the side of his bed, his lamp burning on the bureau at his elbow, Dr. Kinross, in the small hours of the morning, read the paper he had found in the haunted room.

Both the wording of it and the penmanship gave evidence that the writer was a person of some education, though at times her phraseology was stilted, bookish, and even a little melodramatic.

"The child, Eunice, is not ours. For the sake of the moneyed reward which we knew would undoubtedly be offered for her recovery, by her wealthy father, we stole her away from her home. Her mother died at her birth and I, being a trained nurse, was employed by the father to come into the house and take entire charge of the baby. When she was a year old, I secretly married her father's secretary, whose learning and brilliant talents attracted me almost to the point of hypnotising me, and together we hatched the scheme of stealing the child as a means of extracting money from the father. But an unforeseen event thwarted our well-laid plan. On the very night of our flight with the child, her father was killed

in a railroad accident. Somehow the story got out that he had his child with him and the mutilated body of a year-old girl was actually found in the wreck and identified as Eunice by some of the servants of the household. In this turn of affairs, his entire large fortune went to the half-sister of Eunice's father, a single woman of about thirty who lived alone in Washington.

"We wrote to her and told her what we had done and offered to give up the child for a certain sum. But whether she didn't believe us, or whether it served her purpose better not to have the child recovered, I do not know. We have never had any answer to our repeated communications to her. It is now four months since we came away with the child and we have accomplished nothing.

"We are living here incognito on this out-of-the-

way Pennsylvania farm.

"It is my wish to take Eunice to her aunt. The lady has seen the child several times in her visits, of a few days each, to her brother's home in New York and of course she would remember me as her care-taker. She always seemed very fond of Eunice, who is her namesake. I do not believe she would deliberately do her the wrong of keeping her out of her inheritance. If I do not soon take Eunice to her, the child will have changed past recognition. I cannot longer endure the burden of the crime I have committed. I must make amends.

But my husband will not let me expose us both to the risk of punishment and he still hopes to make profit out of the child. He says he will murder me before he will let me confess our crime. I never would have done this wrong of myself. I have been led into it through my insane passion for this diabolically clever and conscienceless man. Tonight must decide my fate. I shall either depart for Washington with the child, or else I shall die either by my own hand or that of my husband. I leave this confession, which I trust will escape my husband's eye and fall into the hands of honest people.

"I shall now write here every fact which may serve to restore Eunice to her rights. The sum of four thousand dollars which I took from my employer's desk the night I fled, will be found pinned to the child's clothing, to be used in paying the expenses which may be involved in restoring her to her aunt, or (in case of failure to prove her identity) to support her until she is able to take care of

herself."

"Four thousand dollars!" mused Kinross, his face pale with the excitement of the story. "The yearly interest of that sum would have more than paid the girl's board in this meagre household. And they have made a slave of her—not even allowing her to go to the public school!"

He felt a ghoulish glee in the thought of confronting old Morningstar with his discovery.

He read on:

"The father of the child was the late S. S. Wolcott, Esquire, of the New York City bar. His half-sister is Miss Eunice Wolcott of

Ayenue, Washington, D. C.

"Miss Wolcott can identify the child by the two tiny moles on her neck just under her left ear, for I once heard her say, when she had the baby on her lap, that Mr. Wolcott had two moles in exactly the same spot.

"The little necklace and locket which will be found on the child were given her by Miss Wolcott and contain her photograph and the child's.

"I solemnly affirm that what I have here written is true.

"BEATRICE DANIELS."

A date, twenty years back, was affixed to the

paper.

Kinross' heart thumped in his breast and he sat transfixed, as the hand which held the paper fell to his knees. Eunice was the niece of Miss Eunice Wolcott!—whom he had known all his life. They had lived neighbours in the city of Washington. Eunice a Wolcott! Incredible! The foster-child of the Morningstars a Wolcott!—than whom a

prouder race had never developed out of that boatload of immigrants that the Mayflower had dumped on Plymouth Rock! Eunice was an heiress if her identity could be proven and Miss Wolcott would own her. He suddenly saw, with clearness, the plight of Miss Wolcott in this discovery of her niece, and a cold fear crept over him that there might be some difficulty in restoring to Eunice her inheritance. It would have been difficult enough if it had been attempted at the time this confession was made. But after all these years? He had been a vouth of eighteen when Miss Wolcott had come into her fortune and he remembered well how it had changed her mode of living from a style of modest dignity to a luxurious elegance. How, after all these years of lavishness, could she go back to a simple habit of life? And then, the hurt to her pride of race (which in the absence of anything more substantial to be proud of, she had nourished and brooded upon almost morbidly) to have to own kinship with a girl reared in such a sordid environment as that of this farm, with less knowledge of the world than any servant of her establishment. He had a tiresome memory of Miss Wolcott's motherly warnings to himself in his callow youth, against "dragging in the mire" his fine old family name by his lamentable lack of that "exclusiveness" which, she assured him, had characterised his mother, of blessed memory, and both

his paternal and maternal grandmothers. It was on the occasion of his having brought home from college for the holidays, that splendid fellow, John Lowry, a diamond in the rough, and in his pride in Lowry's friendship, having taken him to call on Miss Wolcott, who, with her literary tastes and extensive travel, he was sure would appreciate his brilliant college-mate: instead of which he had brought on himself long, philosophic homilies upon the duty incumbent upon "the old families" to preserve their exclusiveness and not to admit into their sacred circle any vulgar new element. When, with vouthful enthusiasm, he had rebutted her theories as narrow, old-fashioned, and so forth, she had pinned him down to the fundamental question, "Do vou, or do vou not, believe in blood, Peter Kinross?"

"I do! The blood that makes true men and women. Not the blood that makes snobs!"—with which parting shot he had left her, and the coolness between them thereafter had never been overcome.

He remembered his cynical reflection at the time of her brother's death. "She'll think the angels in heaven will feel honoured at the arrival of a Wolcott!"

Yet he found himself, just now, perhaps inconsistently, patting himself on the head for his perspicacity in having recognised that Eunice was of no common stock.

He himself had not a doubt of the truth of the "Confession" and of Eunice's identity with the stolen child. But while the moral evidence seemed clear and convincing, would it be sufficient, without the legal proof which he recognised was lacking, to persuade Miss Wolcott of her duty to give up a fortune after nineteen years' possession of it? Here would be a test of the "good blood" of which she was so proud.

"It would be more than common honesty, it would be heroic. But if she 'takes after' her niece

she won't lack the heroism!"

The fact that the communications to Miss Wolcott of Beatrice Daniels, the trained nurse, had been ignored, did not promise well for Eunice's case just now.

Kinross threw himself back on his pillow and clasped his hands under his head. No use to undress—he couldn't sleep. The thought of this girl, brought up as a servant to the Morningstars, her marriage to their son opposed because her poverty made her "not good enough fur our Abe," her ignorance of life combined with her knowledge of books making her unique to the point of being pathetic—this young creature to suddenly find herself a great heiress!—the speculations which the situation gave rise to, drove sleep far from his brain. Would she be good enough for "our Abe" when her story was known? He chuckled when he

thought of old Morningstar's earnest endeavours to hang himself, metaphorically speaking, by opposing his son's marriage to a great fortune.

"She may imagine she's in love with that fellow, Abe, never having seen any other sort of men—but of course a few months in 'the world' will cure her."

He wondered whether he would do well to tell her at once all that he knew of her, or to wait until he had seen Miss Wolcott and learned whether or not there was going to be difficulty about her coming into her own. It would be cruel to raise her hopes before there was some assurance of their being realised. He would do well to put her off, when they met to-morrow night in the haunted room, with as little as would satisfy her for the time being. He would then communicate at once with Miss Wolcott. If she was spending this summer at her Newport house, he would run on to see her immediately. If she were abroad (she frequently spent the summer in Switzerland) he would cable her to return home at once on important financial business.

"A good thing for Eunice that this matter has fallen into my hands," he thought; "one wholly disinterested, and with time, inclination, and, I flatter myself, skill to work the thing out for her in the best possible way; not merely for the fun of the excitement of the case, though there's that side of

it too; but for the spice that there is in seeing a beastly wrong righted!"

He fell to wondering what had become of the husband of "Beatrice Daniels," whether her death had been a suicide or a murder and whether, if the man could be found, his presence would lend any proof to the "Confession."

The oil in his lamp was nearly burned out, as he reached this point in his meditations; and he rose, blew out the flickering light, and in the dawn of the early morning, flung off his clothes.

XVII

INROSS rose so late next morning that the early eleven o'clock dinner of the household served for his breakfast.

Miss Ellery and Miss Parks, when they took their places, were eager to hear of his adventures of the night before.

"Was there anything doing in the haunted room last night?" Daisy eagerly inquired. "And were you game, Pete?—or did you cut and run?"

"Och!" exclaimed Mrs. Morningstar, aghast, "now you didn't sleep over there after all, did you? I didn't hear you make any—and you was in your room till [when] we got up a'ready this morning!"

"Yes," answered Pete, surreptitiously watching Eunice's face opposite him as he spoke. He observed that Abe, at her side, was nearly dislocating his eyeballs trying to look at her without betraying himself by turning his head. Her habitual manner of utter withdrawal from her surroundings was unchanged to-day, though he fancied he detected a quivering of her lashes as he spoke.

"You really did have the fine courage to sleep in that room?" Georgiana asked, leaning towards him across the table with her smile and tone of inviting his confidence.

"I didn't do so very much at sleepin'," he

answered.

"Did the spirits keep you awake?" she asked

indulgently.

Mrs. Morningstar had dropped her knife on her plate and was staring at him apprehensively, while Mr. Morningstar suspended his onslaught upon his food as he awaited his story. Abe and Ollie, also, fixed their eyes upon him wonderingly. Eunice was the only one who did not look at him.

"Did you see it, Doc?" Mrs. Morningstar asked breathlessly, evidently forgetting, in her anxious interest, her objections to Eunice's hearing

anything of the story of the room.

"I seen it, yes, ma'am," Peter answered.

"Oh, tell us about it!" cried Daisy. "What did it do? And what did you do?"

"I ast it was it the spook and it sayed it was. Then I ast it would it set—and it sot. Then I ast would it have a drink and it sayed it didn't drink. 'A cigarette?' I ast. Didn't smoke, it sayed. Ain't up to date, I tole it. Ladies where thinks anything of theirselfs, these days, smokes cigarettes, I says."

"Oh, a lady, was it?" exclaimed Daisy. "Did you have a sympathetic time with her? Go on, tell

us."

"Want some more?" he inquired amiably. "Well, then, I ast her would she play solitaire with me. Didn't gamble neither, she says."

"Oh, look here, Peter; skee-doo!" cried Daisy. "Now stop jollying us and tell us what you did really see—please!" she begged. "Were you up against anything? You're so foxy, I never know when you are jollying us."

"No use my tellin' you if you don't blee' me,"
Peter returned, ostentatiously holding a huge slice
of bread on his palm and spreading butter all

over it.

"I shall sleep there to-night!" Daisy declared.
"I'm game! And I'll fix that ghost! I only wish it

were a man!" she sighed.

"No you don't neither!" exclaimed Mrs. Morningstar. "I'll wenture down that there hall myself and make the door locked before I'll leave no more boarders sleep in there! I'm all worried up with thinkin' Doc was in there last night. I get it in my nerves so ugly if I'm worried up!" she said plaintively.

Peter felt a bit "worried up" himself at the thought of his prospective visit with Eunice that night being interfered with, either by the locking of the door or, worse still, by the irrepressible

Daisy Parks' coming in on them.

"What's the matter, Pop?" he asked, thinking to divert attention from the discussion of the room

to the grotesque appearance of the head of the family, whose neck was swathed in red flannel and who was mixing himself a dose of whisky and water.

"I ain't so good," Mr. Morningstar answered hoarsely. "I took the cold goin' to town vesterday in the rain, to git the money off the bank with them checks you gev me, Pete," he said ruefully. "Don't you be payin' me agin in no such checks!" he growled. "Gimme straight, plain cash! I offered that there dude check of yourn to the bank like what you sayed fur me to do, and tole the feller at the little winder to pay up. He says, 'You must endorse it,' and give it back. 'How's that done?' I ast him. 'I ain't on to these here dude ways!' I says. 'Endorse it on the back,' he says. So I wrote, 'I endorse this here check heartily,'-and gev it to him agin. No, that wouldn't do neither, I must write off my name, he says. Now writin' don't come so wonderful handy to me and I was gittin' mad by that time! But he sayed he couldn't pay me till I got it right done. So I done it fur him. But I don't want to have no more such bother gittin' my money! I don't believe in banks and I never deal at 'em! And here I had to ketch this here cold yet! I got it so bad, I can't make wery loud no more. But Mom she clapt such a tar-plaster on me and tied flannen on, so now I kin make a little louder yet. I conceited a little whisky would help

too-fur all I ain't no drinker, though oncet I did have it so bad in my insides, it went two months till I got better agin. And," he related with evident pride in the facts, "I had to take a whole gallon of whisky! A whole gallon in two months! Indeed, ves. You'll think I'm a drunkard vet! Ain't? But," he boasted, "when a man is a man, he kin temperance hisself. He don't have to leave it be altogether! Abe," he added, turning to his son, "I don't feel fur workin' this after. You'll have to git along without me. I'm goin' to lav. Eunice she can go along to the field over and help you."

"I need her here, Pop," Mrs. Morningstar quickly objected, a jealous anxiety in her voice. "It ain't right, her and our Abe bein' out there to-

gether by theirselves!"

The woman's tone expressed a distrust of the girl which brought the blood to Kinross' face and made Georgiana and Daisy cast their eyes upon their plates.

Kinross glanced across the table at Eunice. Not even a quiver of her lashes betrayed any effect upon her of the woman's insinuations. Her self-control. or indifference, which ever it was, seemed to him

passing strange, almost blameworthy.

"It's market to-morrow," Mrs. Morningstar went on querulously, "and there's all the churnin' to be did. It comes wonderful onhandy, Pop, your gittin' cold just before market day. And the

yeller cow gives such poor milk still, this while past, it'll hardly churn fur a body. Doc he says feed her chop feed and it'll hearten her up, he says, and make the milk better."

"He says, does he!" sneered Mr. Morningstar in a tone freighted with sarcasm. "Yes, I guess a feller would feed his cows chop-feed yet! That would pay, ain't? It takes towners to have the dumm ideas about a cow!"

"Towners?" Georgiana questioned, with a lift of her fine eyebrows.

"Och, I mean a body'd think Pete he was a towner, recommendin' such a dumm thing like that there!"

Mr. Morningstar received a dollar a week extra on Dr. Kinross' board for aiding and abetting his disguise.

"Ain't you leavin' Eunice stay and help us?"

Mrs. Morningstar persisted.

"Her and Abe needn't be together," her husband obstinately stuck to his will. "She can work in the upper field and him in the lower. Do you hear, Abe?" he sharply questioned his son.

Abe growled an affirmative under his breath. He

was afraid of his father.

"Yes!" cried Mrs. Morningstar sarcastically, "they'll both mind you, too, when they're out of eyesight in the fields over!"

"I'll be strollin' over there sometime this after,"

Mr. Morningstar said warningly, "to see how things is goin'."

Georgiana, with a queenly lift of her dark head

and a look of disgust, rose from the table.

Kinross so thoroughly shared the feelings which her manner and look expressed, and he felt such strong disapproval of Eunice's apparent lack of sensitiveness to the shame of this talk, that a sudden warm liking for Georgiana stirred in him. Forgetting his rôle, he rose instinctively, to stand while she passed from the room. But the act was so entirely out of character, that neither of the young ladies recognised it for what it was, though Georgiana's glance did for an instant rest upon him uncertainly, with a vague surprise which quickly brought him to himself—and to his chair.

A little while later, as he lingered in the kitchen after dinner, to get a word alone with Mrs. Morningstar, and (as Providence favoured him by keeping old Morningstar indoors) with Mr. Morningstar as well, he saw Eunice and Abe start out together for the fields. While Mrs. Morningstar and Ollie cleared off the table, he seated himself by the kitchen window and watched the youth and the maiden as long as they were in sight. The incongruity of a Wolcott working in the fields like a peasant and along with a fellow like Abe Morningstar struck him afresh.

"Now you see," Mrs. Morningstar turned to

him, as her husband stretched himself out on the settee and Ollie departed with a pile of dishes to the outer kitchen, "how crazy that there girl is after our Abe—her not havin' a word to say agin workin' in the fields out, such a hot afternoon!"

"But she never does say a word against anything she's asked to do, does she?" questioned Kinross, averse to this interpretation of Eunice' silence

and acquiescence.

"Well, I'd like to see her oncet! What right would she have, I'd like to know? Pop he won't even leave Ollie and Abe speak back—what fur would he leave her?"

"Well, I guess anyhow!" hoarsely echoed Morningstar from the settee.

Kinross saw that his opportunity had come.

"But it's different with Eunice," he began; she's not your own child and does not owe you a daughter's respect and obedience."

Mrs. Morningstar set down the platter she was scraping and stared at him, and Mr. Morningstar sat upright on the settee and fixed him aggressively with his little sharp eyes.

"She owes us more'n what our own children owes us," the latter affirmed; "us raisin' her like our own and her not bein' ourn."

"But you have not 'raised' her as your own. She was taken out of school at a younger age than Ollie was and she has never been clothed as your daughter has been. For years she has been doing the work of two women and has got nothing for it but her board."

"Who's been tellin' you them things?" Mr. Morningstar asked with repressed venom. "And what's it your business anyhow?"

"Eunice she has the right to work fur our keepin' her when she was a child yet," Mrs. Morningstar repeated her oft-reiterated argument.

This brought Kinross to the point at which he had been driving.

"To pay you for keeping her when she was a child? But you told me you had been paid for that—the money found pinned to her dress. And then, you know, after a very few years the child's work more than paid for the expense of boarding her. So that really, as I heard her tell you, you owe her back pay; also, you owe her, now that she is of age, that large sum of money you found pinned to her dress, which you did *not* use for her."

He had turned from the window and sat facing them both, speaking with a cool precision and in a tone of authority which bewildered them.

"Which you did not use for her," he repeated, "and which, therefore, must be refunded. You will pay to Eunice within the next week the sum of three thousand dollars. I'll allow you a thousand dollars for your care of her up to the age of six years, though of course you never gave her a

thousand dollars' worth of care in the whole nine-

teen years you've had her."

"You'll allow!" gasped Mr. Morningstar, while his wife's eyes fairly bulged from her face. "What are you got to do about it?"

"And how'd you know it was that much left

us?" sputtered Mrs. Morningstar.

"I spent the greater part of last night in the haunted room and," he said with mysterious significance, "I learned things. Four thousand dollars was found on the child when you took charge of her. You will pay three thousand dollars to Eunice within a week. If you make any difficulty about it, I shall exact her back pay—two dollars a week for the past five years and interest on the three thousand dollars for nineteen years. See here, Morningstar!"

He rose, and with his hands in his pockets, strolled over to the settee and towered over the shrinking figure of the little farmer. "I am not a man to waste words or enter into useless discussion. I mean just what I say. I am going to befriend this young girl and see that she gets her rights. I learned some things in your haunted room last night which have given me the power, I think, to do so. Now I give you just a week to make up your mind. If you can't come to the point by that time, I'll help you—by means of a law-suit. Do you understand?"



And towered over the shrinking figure of the little farmer



"You must be crazy!" Morningstar chokingly exclaimed. "Pay that there girl three thousand dollars! More'n our Ollie'll git till she gits married a'ready! Why it would leave us poor yet!"

"You have no right to be rich on other people's money. The three thousand dollars belongs to Eunice. Now don't make any fuss, or I'll exact nineteen years' interest besides. You must pay the

money. That's settled."

"Well, I won't! Go ahead with your law-suit!"

Morningstar retorted, his face apoplectic.

"I never thought, Doc, you'd turn on us like this here—or I'd cert'nly never took you to board!" lamented Mrs. Morningstar, her cheeks

very white.

"I'm not 'turning' on you, Mrs. Morningstar. I'm helping you to clear your consciences and do the honest thing to that orphan girl. It is really not so much for the girl's sake—she may not need the money (though again, she may), but for your immortal souls' sake."

"What do you mean—she mayn't need it? Is it that you're sweet on her and want to marry her, or what? Why I ain't never seen you so much as look at her!"

"What was it you seen and heard in that there room?" growled Morningstar, "that gives you such cheek to talk up to us?"

"Ghosts reveal secrets. I may tell you after you've paid over the three thousand dollars."

"Well, I ain't payin' it! Put that in your pipe

and smoke it, will you?"

- "As you please. If there's a law-suit, you'll pay it with interest and back wages besides. Let me know by the time I come back, which you prefer. I'm going away to-morrow morning and will return here in a week."
- "Not here! Me and Mom ain't boardin' you another day!"
- "Then shall I put up at the village tavern when I come back?"
- "I'll tell them young ladies you ain't no farmhand!"
- "And lose the money I have promised you if you did not betray who I was?" he asked indifferently.

This always strong argument he saw was answer enough to the threat.

"Now, Mrs. Morningstar," he turned to her quietly, "will you be so good as to let me have the little necklace and locket found on the child, containing her photograph and that of a lady?"

Mrs. Morningstar stared at him almost with horror. "Did you see the ghost—and did she tell you about that there chain and locket?" she faltered.

"I can't explain anything to you now. I may

tell you when I come back. Meantime, give me the necklace."

"Don't you give it to him!" Morningstar ordered her. "He'll be usin' it fur evidence, or what!"

"It's wore thin," said Mrs. Morningstar. "I wore it on Ollie till she overgrew it a'ready."

"Let me have it at any rate."

"I got it in the chest up attic."

"All right. You have it down for me by this afternoon. Remember, Morningstar," he concluded, turning to leave the room, "I give you one week from to-day. Not a day more."

He strolled out; and the man and woman were left alone to confront the horror of parting with three thousand dollars of their hoarded accumulation.

XVIII

INROSS had time to become very restless, while he waited that night in the haunted room, before Eunice made her appearance. He was rather apprehensive lest the curiosity of some of the household about this room might lead to his being discovered there alone with the girl. For her sake, he would greatly dislike the appearance of it.

It was quite ten o'clock before he heard her light

step in the long hall outside the room.

When at last she stood before him, he was held spellbound, for an instant, by the radiance of her face. Warmth, colour, happiness, took the place of the pale, passive, remote aspect she ordinarily wore. Her whole person seemed to breathe her eagerness to hear the story he had to tell her. At least so he interpreted it.

He placed a chair for her, the only one in the room, and sat down himself on the foot of the bed.

He felt rather at a loss as to how he should deal with her. It was hard to have to disappoint the bright expectation of that pretty young face.

"Would it mean anything to you, Eunice," he began, surprised at himself to note how his voice instinctively softened when he spoke to her, as one would naturally modify one's tones in speaking to a timid, sensitive child, "to be told you were born of very good blood?"

"Why should it not?"

"But in your isolation from the world, can you possibly have learned the significance of such a fact?"

"It means, doesn't it, that my parents were peo-

ple of gentle and noble minds?"

"Well," he smiled, "we do not always attach just that meaning to it. Some very degenerate families are proud of their 'good blood."

"Meaning merely their inherited rank? Yes, I

know," she nodded. "But

"" The rank is but the guinea's stamp,
A man's a man for a' that.'

I should like to know that there is no taint of dishonour in my blood."

"You may have that comforting knowledge. Your father was a New York lawyer of high standing and stainless reputation."

Her face glowed at his words.

"I have a pride in it!" she answered him.

"You may well have. Now," he went on, "as to the current story about this room and its connection with you—I will tell you what it is."

He told her, then, nearly all that he knew, with-

holding only her prospects of great wealth and the source of his knowledge of her. If she knew of the existence of the "Confession" he had found, she would have a right to see it. He did not wish her to see it until he had ascertained what the probability was that her aunt would recognise her claims.

Eunice heard him with breathless attention. But the break in the continuity of his story bewildered her. "But how, then, did you come to learn what you say is unknown to all others—that this man and woman who brought me here were not my parents and that I am the daughter of a New York lawyer, from whom they stole me away from my home?"

"I can't tell you that to-night, Eunice—how I came by my knowledge. It is better that I do not —just yet. Trust me—and have patience."

She looked at him, the brightness of her face unclouded by his denial, but she did not reply.

"You do trust me?"

"Why should I not?" she asked with naïve

surprise.

"In fact," he responded, "I don't know just why you should. You don't know anything about me."

"I know everything about you!" sprang from her. "And nothing."

"Now," he protested, "that sounds as subtle as though it came from Georgiana. What does it mean?"

"With my heart I know you. With my head—I don't understand you at all."

"You pay me the highest compliment, if your unsullied heart teaches you an instinctive trust of me! With your head you don't understand me?" he questioned her curiously.

"I don't understand why, if you love Miss Ellery, you should go out of your way to avoid her—even disguising yourself—and feigning un-

couthness?"

Her simplicity afforded him the liveliest entertainment.

"So that has been bothering you, has it? Well, you see, I came here to be quiet—and Miss Ellery isn't, just to say, a restful person."

She looked unenlightened. "But you love peo-

ple who are not restful?"

"I don't always love to be with them."

"Am I restful?"

She asked it with her look and tone of wistfulness which he was learning to watch for in talking to her.

"If I told you you were, what inference would you draw? You are such an alarmingly logical little person, one has to be wary—or be trapped into all sorts of admissions one wouldn't dream of making."

"Is it a commendation to be told you are 'restful'? I would suppose that people who count for

something in our lives do not rest us-they stir us!"

She spoke with evident feeling. Surely, surely, she was not thinking of Abe! He would not believe it.

"And we like to be stirred, don't we?" he acquiesced. "That's what we live for—to experience moments, or hours, of thrilling sensations."

"Does Miss Ellery make you experience those?"

"Those?"

"Moments, or hours, of thrilling sensations?"
His shoulders shook with soundless laughter.
But he pulled himself together. "I have reason to believe she would if she could."

He read in her open countenance that he spoke in enigmas. But he did not offer to explain. He vaguely wondered why she seemed to want to talk of Miss Ellery, with her own exciting story so freshly put to her.

He watched her without speaking, as, looking away from him, she toyed thoughtfully with her apron strings. Presently she drew a long breath, lifted her hand to push a strand of hair from her forehead, and again rested her eyes upon his face.

"I don't even know my own name!" she said. "Even that I must learn from you. What is it?"

"I understand you have always been called Eunice Morningstar?"

"Yes."

"Will you have patience with me? I don't want to tell you even that just yet."

"Will it be long before you tell me?"

"I will tell you everything just as soon as I possibly can. I know it must be maddening to you to be put off like this—but it is out of consideration for you (for no other reason) that I want to postpone telling you some things."

"I will wait."

"Thank you-for your trust in me."

"So many things puzzle me though."

"Necessarily!"

"I can't see why Mr. and Mrs. Morningstar have thought it necessary to keep the story of this room from me. How could it have harmed them to let me know?"

"They have kept it from you because there was one phase of it which, from their standpoint, it was very necessary that you should not know. It was for fear that you should hear this from the neighbours that they have always kept you isolated. Listen to me, Eunice! When that woman died, the sum of four thousand dollars was found pinned to your dress; it was of course manifestly intended to pay those who should take care of you. The Morningstars kept this fact from you, making them believe you owed them a great debt for their charity towards you."

Eunice gazed at him in amazement, an intensified excitement in her eyes.

"I am not, then, under the least obligation to them?" she said breathlessly. "It is this, then, which Abe has meant by his many insinuations that if I knew a certain thing he knew, I would defy his parents! I never dreamed of anything like this! Then I am free—free, and not a slave!"

"So then," he abruptly asked, unable to repress the question that sprang to his lips, "you will defy them and marry Abe? It has been your supposed obligation to them that has held you back from doing what they disapproved?"

She looked at him-an expression in her eyes that was inexplicable to him. She did not answer him. Suddenly her lashes drooped and to his consternation, he saw two great tears roll over her face. Her relation with Abe was actually a matter of deep feeling! It was, to be sure, not more impossible than everything else about her! There might be plenty of excuse for her being in love with Abe, in view of her life-long environment, but he felt an intolerance, almost a disgust, with it that rather dampened his enthusiasm in championing her cause. She didn't seem worth while if she were capable of that. At the same time, her distress gave him an impulse to go to her, child that she was, take out his handkerchief, and wipe away her tears. Being kind to her was a luxurious pleasure, she was so grateful for kindness. But he felt the need of restraining himself. He abruptly asked her a question.

"Why do you bear it so meekly when Mrs. Morningstar browbeats and insults you—before other people too? Why do you allow her to?"

She had sunk back in her chair limply. The warmth and colour had all gone from her. She looked up at him, but the fire had died out of her eyes.

"Why should I mind it? It is to me as a hen's cackle."

Her words gave Kinross a shock of astonishment. He felt a thrill of pride in her, mingled with a humorous sense of her remoteness from all ordinary standards. So, it was not poverty of spirit that made her so forbearing, but a largeness of mind that made the woman's noisy upbraidings of no least moment to her.

"You are happy indeed to be able to rise above it, instead of letting it make you suffer misery and rage."

She did not answer. The subject was evidently without interest to her.

"But let us not speak of her," he said, anxious to restore the radiance that had so suddenly and mysteriously left her. "I have a notion that I want to examine you, may I?—as to your knowledge of these books,"—glancing towards the bookcase;

"with a view to getting you employment if it

prove necessary."

"If it prove necessary? You mean," she asked, her voice subdued, her eyes again downcast, "if I don't marry Abe?"

"Well, yes," he lied.

Her lip quivered, but she caught it under her teeth and after an instant answered him quietly.

"I am ready to be examined."

Evidently he wounded her by his references to Abe. He did not understand it. However, he would avoid that subject, too, hereafter.

He told her, then, what he had not mentioned before to any of the family, that he held the Chair of Psychology in the college of the near-by city; and he explained to her that by virtue of his profession, he could the better "examine" her.

When he spoke of himself she listened with an interest that brought back to her face some of the brightness which had momentarily left it.

The examination which followed proved to be the first in his experience in which he found enjoyment. It was not quite the conventional examination. It soon degenerated into the form, at least, of a talk about books, though Kinross' mental attitude, the while, continued to be that of a school-master examining a pupil. He had never before found any pupil quite so interesting. Her quaint talk revealed to him how much more real to her

were the dream creatures of her books than were the people of her actual world.

"It seems so strange, so unreal to me that I should be speaking out like this of my secret thoughts of things," she said, a light of wonder in her eyes, when he had led her on to talk of the tragic mating of Lydgate with Rosamond in Middlemarch; of the irony of fate in the gifted doctor's so narrowly missing his true mate, the highminded Dorothea: of the horror it must have been to the mother-heart of Mrs. Copperfield to die and leave David to the mercy of that dreadful stepfather; of the deep significance of that cry wrung from Guido in the hour of his extremity, in which, when all other sources of help are closed to him, he calls upon Pompilia for mercy, confessing in that cry what only his fear of the gallows could extort from him-his faith that when all others failed him, she whom he had traduced before all Rome, would surely come to his aid; of the penalty which life exacts for indecision of purpose or failure to respond to the vital call of Nature, through cowardice or other weakness, as in The Statue and The Bust. He was astonished to find how keenly she felt and saw much which he would have deemed impossible to one of such limited experiences. Untrammelled by the world's conventions in forming her opinions or in taking impressions of things, there was a freedom and breadth in her way of

looking at life (the life of her world, peopled by characters out of books) and a candour in her speech that was refreshing to say the least. Her own delight in speaking, for the first time, with one who could understand her "secret life," as she called it, was evident in her beaming countenance.

There was an excitement to him, too, in their communion. For the first time in his experience, he was talking to a woman with a spontaneity, a naturalness, that seemed to open up the flood-gates of his soul.

He had never before met any woman who seemed to him to combine such evident ardour of temperament with such fineness. Surely here was a unique individuality, he thought, with a thrill of happy anticipation—the long hunger of his unsatisfied manhood leaping to meet the vague yearning for life which he read in her strangely expressive eyes, with their passionate fire.

He was warned, at length, by the sputtering of the wick in his lamp, how the hours had flown.

"It is good-bye as well as good-night," he said as he rose and held out his hand to her. "I am going away to-morrow."

The sudden blankness of her face almost alarmed him. She turned white and she seemed unable to speak.

"But I shall be back within a week," he hastened to reassure her. "And I shall be able to tell

you everything then, I hope. Did you think I meant I was going to break my promise to you?"

"Going away?" she repeated dully, ignoring his

question. "You are going away?"

"Believe me," he begged her, "that I shall keep my promise to you. You shall know all that I know within a week."

"I do believe you—it is not that. It is—that

you are going away!"

He was puzzled. "It will be dull for you, you mean, after the excitement of our talks in this room?"

She drew a long breath and her eyes fell from their intent gaze into his.

"I mean—since you came here, the world has seemed full of light. When you go, no doubt it will return to its original colour."

"What colour is that?" he asked smiling.

"A pale drab!"

He did not for an instant give a sentimental in-

terpretation to her words.

"Perhaps it will be well for your eyes to have a week's rest from the lurid light of my presence for I hope to bring back some news to you that will dazzle you sure enough—unless I am greatly disappointed."

"News that will dazzle me? You mean that you are going to try to secure me a teacher's position?" she asked with humble gratefulness.

"You would call that dazzling news, Eunice—if I came back with a position for you at teaching school? Well, well, everything depends upon one's point of view, of course. There are some young women to whom that would appear a 'pale drab.' I shouldn't wish it to my meanest enemy!"

"Then that isn't what you meant?"

"You will be disappointed if I say no?"

"I am in much suspense about my future. I am quite determined to leave here and it would be a relief to me to have something definite in view."

"You may feel entirely at peace about that, Eunice. I promise you I'll take care of it for you."

"You are sure you can find me a place and that I am not imposing on your kindness to ask it of you?"

"If I take a day off and roll up my sleeves to it, I may be able to accomplish it—don't give it a

moment's anxiety!"

The contrast between the prosaic lot of a teacher to which she looked as a good almost too great to be hoped for, and the brilliant fate he knew to be possibly horse struck him drawatically.

be possibly hers, struck him dramatically.

All the while he had been talking to her to-night, he had been trying to catch sight of that index to her identity given in the "Confession"—the two little moles under her left ear. He had not been able to see them and the fear began to trouble him that they were not there to be seen. He now

decided that he could not go on his errand to her aunt without this proof to add to all his other evidence.

He put his question with a directness that startled her.

"Pardon my inquisitiveness, but do you have two small moles on your neck under your left ear?"

His inquiry seemed to her irrelevant to the point of madness.

"What has that to do with it?"

"To do with what?"

"With anything. I mean what do you want to know that for?"

"To be able to identify you as the daughter of your father. Please tell me."

"Yes, I have."

"May I see them?"

She turned her head and he saw the small dark spots on her white neck.

"Thank you. If you had the least idea what those two spots may mean to you, little girl!—now if I don't go away at once, I shall be tempted to tell you the whole thing. It will be an infinitely better story, I confidently believe, if I keep it until my return."

He clasped her hand, which rested cold in his own. Then he left her, for a few hours' sleep before his departure in the early morning.

XIX

R. AND MRS. MORNINGSTAR held counsel together and came to some astute conclusions.

"If that there Doc didn't have somepin up his sleeve to down us with, he wouldn't have the dare to speak up to us so positive," Mr. Morningstar gloomily reasoned. "To be sure I wouldn't give in to him and make over all that there money to the girl if I didn't have afraid he'd squeeze me fur more'n that yet—like what he sayed he'd do."

"Abram Morningstar! You ain't going to up and throw three thousand dollars at that girl!" his wife exclaimed incredulously.

"Will you leave me know, then, how I'm gettin' out of it?" he demanded.

They were together in the kitchen just after Kinross' departure on his week's absence. Mr. Morningstar was still too ill from his cold to leave the settee and his wife was in the act of putting a mustard plaster on him when he opened up the discussion of what lay so heavily on their hearts.

"He must have took a shine to Eunice," Mrs. Morningstar lamented, "to be takin up fur her like what he's doin'. I don't know what's got into

the men, such dumm taste as they all show. There's Ollie, she's twicet as fat and has nicer cloes and near twicet the schoolin' as what Eunice's got. The girl's just that tricky, she makes eyes at the men behind our backs, Pop—that's wot!"

"I've been thinkin' it out how we could spite him back," Mr. Morningstar said, lowering his voice and indicating with a twirl of his thumb the departed boarder. "If we do have to give Eunice them three thousand dollars, we kin keep it in the family and get ahead of that darned towner by marryin' her to Abe right aways. Ain't? You see, what that city sharper's after is to git them three thousand fur hisself. It ain't often a girl—even a towner—has that much to bring to her Mister. Abe couldn't git no girl 'round here with that much. If we do have to give her the money, we couldn't do better by Abe than to leave him marry her."

"Well, mebbe," Mrs. Morningstar answered, considering the matter as she buttoned her husband's shirt over the plaster. "But it would rile me to have to marry our Abe to a girl we brang up on charity."

"That ain't neither here nor there," Mr. Morningstar sneered irritably at this sentiment. "What we want is to settle these here finances without no more loss than we can't help."

"There's this to say," Mrs. Morningstar added; if she marries Abe, mebbe that underhanded Hen

Mucklehenny will be comin' back to our Ollie, when he sees he can't have Eunice."

"Yes, we'd be spitin' him too," Mr. Morningstar fairly smacked his lips with satisfaction. "The hand of Providence would be in it and it would all work out for His honour and glory. Yes, I tell you the Lord sees a many a thing head of Hisself that way!"

"You're spitin' every one but the one I'd like to spite!" snapped Mrs. Morningstar, "and that's that deceitful girl, with her sneakin' ways and her playin' her tricks behind a body's back—after all

we done fur her a'ready!"

"Seems we haven't darst to talk about that no more—what we done fur her. Seems she done everything fur us," Mr. Morningstar sarcastically added. "Now look at here, Mom, we'll fix it up between Abe and Eunice before the Doc gits back—see? I'll go ahead and tell Abe he has the dare to pass his promise to Eunice and you kin tell her she dare have Abe now without workin' no more tricks to git him."

It was a bitter thing to Mrs. Morningstar, this task allotted to her, but it was to become more bitter still before she was through with it.

It appeared for a moment that it was going to be made easy. Abe, entirely unsuspicious of what was brewing, came to his mother that very evening, after his day's work was over, with a passionate protest against her opposition to his marrying Eunice and a plea that she "leave" him have the

girl.

"To be sure, Eunice she knows you're agin it, so she purtends she don't want me. You go tell her you're in fur it—our gettin' promised together—and certainly then she'll be only too glad to git me."

This was Abe's point of view.

"Glad to git you! Well, I guess mebbe!" Mrs. Morningstar retorted. "It's a wonder you would-

n't look higher, Abe Morningstar."

"I have wonderful tired, Mom, of hearin' of this 'lookin' higher.' I got my age—I'm a man and it's my own affairs if I look high or low for my wife. Eunice she suits me all right. Even if she won't have no aussteuer and ain't got nothin' comin' to her, she's anyhow not one to spend at the cloes or to run, and she's so handy at the work, I'd never have to hire fur her. So if I am lookin' low, I ain't doin' so bad, takin' it all in all. If you and Pop would only stop kickin', I'd soon git her to pass her promise. And I tell you right here, Mom, I'm goin' to marry her anyhow—whether yous like it or whether yous don't. So yous might as well stop your kickin'. To be sure it would make me less work persuadin' Eunice, if yous would stop kickin'. She's awful stubborn-headed about it."

Mrs. Morningstar sniffed contemptuously.

"Och, but men is dumm things! Her stubbornheaded about takin' you!—when she's been makin' eves at you and tryin' to git you ever since you was in long pants a'ready and she was in long frocks!"

"I ain't took notice she was tryin' to git me," Abe answered sullenly. "I can't ever git her to be even sociable with me. And before she'd go buggyridin' or to a circus with me! Cert'nly that was

because she had afraid of yous."

"Well, Abe, seein' this here's the way you feel and you bein' my own son that way, I'll put to aside my regrets and leave her have you. I'll tell her to-morrow."

Abe was astonished at his easy success with his mother. He had anticipated a complete routing.

"Will you make it all right with Pop?" he eagerly and gratefully inquired.

With subtle diplomacy she answered that she would.

It was not until the next evening that she brought herself to broach the subject with Eunice.

When the evening chores were finished and the girl was about to take her lamp to go up to bed, she stopped her and made her sit down with her in the kitchen.

"I got to speak somepin to you," she began in a tone of sullen reluctance, her whole person bristling with the antagonism she felt against her enforced concession. "Me and Pop's been talkin' it

over and we conceited we'd tell you that you'd worked pretty good and steady fur us and now that you're got your age and ain't got no more claim on us, we wouldn't like to see you throwed out on the world neither—seein' how we brang you up like our own. So we just conceited that rather'n let you unpurtected on the world, we'd keep on bein' parents to you, though to be sure, we thought to look higher fur our Abe, him bein' our only son."

Eunice, sitting opposite her at the kitchen table, was looking at her rather vaguely. But at this reference to Abe, her eyes lost their absent gaze and she met her foster-mother's eyes with a fixity which the latter found almost disconcerting.

She made no reply, but waited in silence for Mrs. Morningstar's ramblings to come to a focus.

"To be sure, our Abe could do a lot better. But then, seein' you're got him so's he thinks he wants you, why us we're not puttin' no hindrance in your way. You kin have him."

She looked for some joy or gratitude from Eunice. But the girl continued to regard her fixedly—and without replying.

"We mean it," she said testily. "You're got the dare to marry him—seein' you want him so bad. To be sure, I guess it's hard fur you to take it in that we're leavin' you have your way!"

Still the girl had nothing to say.

"Well?" cried Mrs. Morningstar impatiently. "What are you got to say fur yourself? Can't you even speak saddy [thank you] to a body?"

"I wonder what you expect me to say," the girl's soft voice at last answered the woman's rough tones. "To thank you for offering me your son?"

"That's little enough to expect anyhow!" Mrs.

Morningstar retorted.

Eunice rose slowly and stood resting her hand on the table. "Had you anything else to say to me?"

"You needn't go right aways. Set awhile," she commanded. "There's some things we'd better talk out, now we're at it."

"What things?" Eunice asked hesitatingly, not

sitting down.

"Och, I'd like to know how soon you and Abe thinks yous would like to stand up to say Yes [get married] and when you'll want to be buyin' your aussteuer, and when yous want to go to housekeepin'—things like them."

"We need not discuss those things. I will not

marry Abe."

Mrs. Morningstar stared at her uncomprehendingly. Eunice waited.

"What d'you say?"

"I will not marry Abe."

"Och," the woman said impatiently, "what's

the use foolin' time away with purtendin'—and talkin' so dumm?"

"I am feigning nothing. I would not dream of

marrying Abe."

"Is it that you want to be coaxed, or whatever?" Mrs. Morningstar demanded, an angry red in her cheeks. "There I am fur stoppin'—when it would come to coaxin'! I ain't coaxin' you any!"

"It would be useless, certainly."

- "What do you mean?" asked the woman, fairly bewildered at such unexpected and incredible behaviour.
- "Why should you think I want to marry Abe?" the girl suddenly asked. "I have long wondered why you thought I must necessarily wish to."

She hesitated an instant, while Mrs. Morningstar could only stare at her in blank amazement.

"Because," continued Eunice, "there is no fate which I would think more tragic than being married to your son."

"You ain't talkin' sincere!" the woman cried.
"I'd like to know how you think you could do better, or half as good?"

"I think I could not do worse."

"Couldn't do worse'n marry our Abe! You!"

The girl was patiently silent. Something convincing in her bearing made Mrs. Morningstar begin to suspect that she actually meant what she

said; and even greater than her indignation at this unbelievable slight to her son, was her sudden dread of having that three thousand dollars go out of the family.

"It's her thinkin' that there money's comin' to her makes her so sassy and high-minded about Abe," she thought. "Or mebbe Hen Mucklehenny got a chanct to see her unbeknownst to me and she thinks she'd be doin' better to take him."

"So this here's your gratefulness fur all we done fur you a'ready!" she upbraided the girl.

A look of weariness came into Eunice's eyes. She took up her lamp and turned away from the table.

"Who do you want to marry then?" Mrs. Morningstar stopped her with the question.

"That is not a matter that it is necessary to discuss."

"Don't give me none of your back talk! And what do you do with usin' high language as if you was educated yet!"

Eunice did not answer.

"Is it Hen Mucklehenny you're after?"

"He's not quite so objectionable as Abe; but I'm not after him."

Inasmuch as Hen was considered by the Morningstars quite good enough for Ollie, this rejection of him by Eunice was an offence almost as great as her refusal of Abe.

"I'll tell you what!" Mrs. Morningstar harshly exclaimed, "you're after that there Doc Kinross, that's what! Him and you fixed it up between yous somehow—though fur the life of me I don't see when, fur you certainly ain't never out of my sight long enough to make up to no man. A body'd have to keep you locked up in a closet yet, to keep the men away from you—or contrariwise, to keep you from makin' eyes at the men and temptin' 'em! It's the three thousand dollars you think's comin' to you has made you all of a sudden so stuck-up about our Abe! And now you think with all that money, you kin marry a towner yet!"

A hot colour burned in Eunice's cheek, but she looked at Mrs. Morningstar steadfastly.

"Three thousand dollars coming to me? What do you mean?"

"You want to purtend you don't know yet!" the woman said sarcastically, though her eyes wavered from the girl's face doubtfully. Was it possible she did not know?

"Will you explain to me what you mean?" Eunice repeated.

"It ain't neither here nor there! I didn't mean nothin'. Is Doc Kinross sweet on you?"

The girl's lips quivered and her eyes suddenly glistened with tears.

"Do you want to know what he thinks of me?" she asked, her voice vibrating with suppressed bit-

terness. "He thinks so poorly of me as to believe

me capable of marrying Abe!"

Her hopeless tone implied that he could think no worse. Mrs. Morningstar was dumbfounded. Such a view of Abe was incomprehensible. And that it should be held by this girl whom she scorned, seemed past belief.

And yet, deep down in her heart she knew that Eunice spoke sincerely; that passing strange as it seemed, she actually did not want to marry Abe; that if that three thousand dollars was to remain in the family, she must stoop to coax! She coax this pauper girl, her serf, to marry her Abe! It was a bitter humiliation.

She began at first diplomatically. She said that of course they wouldn't "leave" their adopted daughter go penniless to her husband and that if she did marry their son they would give her a nice purse full of money—up in the hundreds.

But Eunice did not rise to the bait.

Then the woman humbled herself to plead with her and to speak of Abe's love for her. But this, too, failed.

"Let us talk of it no more," Eunice gently begged, feeling utterly exhausted after a half hour of the futile discussion. "It is of no avail to talk."

Mrs. Morningstar tried, then, to lash herself into a rage and upbraid her obstinacy. But she found herself strangely tongue-tied. This was a

new and unfamiliar Eunice, this girl who calmly refused to obey her, who used as "high language" as if she were "book-learnt," and who didn't think Abe "good enough fur her"! In place of the contempt with which she had always treated her, she found herself inspired almost with a sense of awe before her and certainly with a novel feeling of respect.

When at last Eunice left her for the night, Mrs. Morningstar, having entirely failed in her commission, wondered, as she took her lamp to go upstairs, what "Pop" would say of her failure and whether the girl's amazing refusal would leave him as dumbfounded as it had left her.

INROSS' telegram to Newport brought an immediate reply. Miss Wolcott was at her summer home and would be there until late in the autumn.

He had time on his journey to reflect upon the episodes of the past few days with comparative coolness of judgment and to see some things with more clearness than on a first view. Also, the various developments of the summer appeared in somewhat different perspective now that he looked at them from a little distance.

"I went to that farm to find seclusion, quiet, a monotony that would leave me free to study! And what I fell into! Plots and counter-plots—with country courtships, disguises, a stolen infant, haunted chambers, murders, suicides, ghosts and a discovered heiress! Who'd 'a' thought it! I couldn't have found half so much excitement at Newport. Why, it's been a strain!"

He had been told before leaving the farm that his fellow boarders were to go back to town before his return. When he had paid his board, Mrs. Morningstar, under the effect of his extra fees for her conniving in his disguise, had thawed so far as to volunteer the promise that she would account to the young ladies for his departure by saying that the farm-hand had been discharged because of the inconvenient and uneconomical frequency of his headaches. He wondered whether, in his absence, any accidental hints would be dropped as to his pretended character. He could not think, without a growing uneasiness, of the fast approaching reopening of the college, when he would have to meet Miss Ellery and Miss Parks as Dr. Kinross of the Faculty.

It was when he was nearing the end of his journey that some indistinct apprehensions which had been vaguely troubling him began to assume definite shape and the realisation to dawn on him that perhaps he had been rash in coming away and leaving Eunice in ignorance, even for a week, of her possible good fortune. Goodness knows what she might do in this week of his absence—Abe was evidently very desperately in love with her and the Morningstars, in their dire chagrin at being obliged to pay over to her that three thousand dollars, might drive her to the point of marrying Abe in self-defence, as it were. Of course it was only her utter ignorance of life that made her tolerate Abe, though even that did not seem to excuse such bad taste. Fancy Miss Wolcott receiving Abe Morningstar as her nephew-in-law! The picture made him laugh aloud.

The wearing doubt as to whether Miss Wolcott could be brought to acknowledge Eunice as her niece and recognise her claims was never absent from his mind for an instant. At times he felt that he was going on a fool's errand. If, at the time the Daniels wrote to her, she had not even tried to see the child to prove or disprove their story, how could he hope that now, after all these years, she would concede what was so much against her own interests?

"If only I were a diplomat, instead of 'a blunt, plain man,' I might lead up to my story so prettily and persuasively that before she knew it, she'd be burning to illustrate artistically the beauty of self-sacrifice in her own person. But I know I'll make a muddle of it. 'Your money or your life!' That's

more my style. More's the pity!"

He consoled himself with the reflection that if Eunice did not come into the money, it would probably be far better for her and it was only by reason of his sense of justice that he was trying to place her in command of the great wealth that belonged to her. He himself was remarkably free from the money madness of the age. He had always had more than enough for his needs, but not enough to spoil him, and had therefore gone through life, thus far, escaping the mania for accumulating wealth.

"Her money may quite spoil the attractiveness

she now has in her simplicity, her perfect naturalness when one is alone with her. Just the antipodes of Georgiana! There couldn't be a more extreme contrast of character. Georgiana is a personified pose. If she ever did a spontaneous thing in my presence, ever made an unstudied remark, I think I'd fall in love with her on the spot!"

It was at five o'clock on Sunday afternoon that he presented himself at the home of Miss Wolcott. He sent in his card and waited on the piazza, which was furnished like a sitting-room and shaded by screens from the hot summer sun. His suspense as to the outcome of the impending interview made him too uneasy to sit still, and he paced the long porch in his nervousness, wondering for the hundredth time how he could most convincingly relate his story, and trying to school himself against too great bluntness in the delicate matter he had to handle. He rather took it out of the porch furniture before Miss Wolcott made her appearance, for in striding about he pushed things ruthlessly out of his way, nearly upsetting a spindlelegged table holding a slender vase of roses, and making a stool noisily collide with another table covered with books and magazines.

A sudden swish of skirts in the doorway made him turn about at the end of the porch and come back quickly to meet the uncomfortably stout little woman who walked forward to greet him. Though Miss Wolcott was gowned in the thinnest of white material, she looked overheated. Her complexion was distressingly florid, her movements were ungraceful and her voice had an unpleasant sharpness. Kinross felt his already faint hopes fail him entirely as he realised the general hardness of her aspect. He pinned his case upon what he believed he recognised in her countenance, in spite of its coldness—an uprightness of character that perhaps justified, somewhat, her pride of blood.

"It is good to see you again, Dr. Kinross," she began as they sat down together. "It is always a pleasure to me to meet old friends. Did you know," she continued volubly, "I had a call from your brother one day last winter, when he had run on to Washington from New York—it was on one of my at home days and of course he met a lot of his old friends—and he remarked as he was leaving, how pleasant it had been to meet them. I told him he would never meet any but old acquaintances at my house. In our circle we don't meet the new people, fortunately."

This was a good beginning, certainly.

"But what a tragic deprivation to the new people!" he remarked, with a perfunctory smile intended to take the edge from his sarcasm.

"I am aware," she said stiffly, "that you do not share my strong feelings about such things."

"No," he said, "I'd associate with the Devil,

if I found him interesting."

"Such bohemian views are unworthy of your blood," she said with grave reproachfulness. "I hope you don't go so far as to be willing to marry out of your rank?"

"No, I draw the line there. I'm not willing to marry out of my rank—nor yet in it. I'm quite

unwilling to marry at all."

"You haven't been an easy prey," she admitted. "How have you managed to escape falling in love all these years?"

"But love has nothing to do with rank—if you'll

pardon my platitudes."

"No one, man or woman, need permit himself to fall in love outside of his own station in life," she said dogmatically. "Or if he is so weak, let him conquer himself."

Kinross smiled and was silent. He would not argue.

Miss Wolcott abruptly changed the subject.

"Well, Peter, what is this important business matter' which gives me the pleasure of a call from you? Your telegram has made me very curious. I didn't know how to wait until you got here."

"But you must really wait a few moments longer. I must not be precipitate—that's the one thing I've been telling myself all the way here—not to be precipitate, but to break it to you gently,

to lead up to it diplomatically—rhetorically, if possible. Unfortunately, my style was ever à la Cook Book—direct and to the point."

"Dear me! Well, do adhere to your customary style and spare me the rhetoric. I prefer to hear your news, or whatever it is, in your most Saxon form."

"The shock might be too great."

This was not at all as he had meant to steer his communication, for no one could have felt more earnestly the gravity of what he had come to communicate, and his chaffing was far from expressing his true mood; but he felt that his case was lost already, that rhetoric could not save it, and his tongue ran away with him.

"It's something 'shocking,' then?" inquired

Miss Wolcott.

"That depends on how you look at it."

"Well? Do hurry, please!"

"Miss Wolcott," he said solemnly, "I'm afraid what I have to tell you will not be welcome news."

She looked surprised at his sudden seriousness and waited, with what patience she could command, for him to go on.

He rose and walked the length of the piazza, then came back and stood before her.

"I am very stupid! I don't know how to begin it."

"Gracious, Peter, you're not thinking of proposing to me, are you?"

"It would require less daring than what I have

to tell you."

"If you don't say it soon, I shall have hysterics!"

He cleared his throat and his voice was not quite

firm as he plunged in.

"Let me begin with a question. Tell me—were you perfectly convinced at the time of your brother's death, that his little daughter was with him and died with him? Did you ever have any doubts about it?"

Her eyes opened wide in amazement. "Of course not!"

"Did you see the dead child who was identified as your niece?"

"No. I was in Florida at the time of the accident and did not get back in time for the funeral."

The woman had turned white and was looking dazed.

"The child was not with her father, Miss Wolcott."

Miss Wolcott sat upright, her hands clutching the sides of her chair.

"Well?" she half gasped.

"That child is living."

"Impossible!" she exclaimed sharply.

"She is alive," repeated Kinross.

"Alive! My brother's child! But it can't be true!"

"Did you ever receive, a few months after Mr. Wolcott's death, any communications telling you that your niece had been stolen from her home and would be returned to you—for a reward?"

"Never!"

Kinross looked at her uncertainly. Was she telling the truth? If she was not, she was a genius at acting, for her bewilderment seemed very genuine.

"Ah!" she suddenly exclaimed breathlessly, lifting her hand, "I remember something—some anonymous letters—that I received—one after another—shortly after my brother's death, telling me that if I would pay down a certain sum of money, a matter of vital interest would be revealed to me. Who would dream of paying any attention to such communications? I tossed them into the waste basket, of course, and never gave them a second thought."

"Did none of them mention Eunice?"

"Never. They were melodramatically cautious, I remember. Oh, what are you going to tell me?"

"The kidnappers defeated their own ends by their cowardice. If they had given you any hint that they held Eunice as a hostage—"

He paused questioningly.

"Well?" she asked excitedly.

"You would not have ignored their communications?"

"If I had had any least reason for believing them, of course not. What a question to ask!"

He took from his pocket a long envelope and drew from it a manuscript. It was the "Confession."

"Perhaps, after all, this will be the best way to tell you."

He handed it to her.

"Read it, please, while I wait."

He rose and walked to the farthest end of the piazza—while she, with fingers that shook, unfolded the paper.

Kinross knew that he did an unbusiness-like thing in letting the paper leave his own hands. But Miss Wolcott was an old family friend and when it came to the point, he found himself quite unable to offer her the discourtesy of handing her the *copy* of the original document which he had brought with him for that purpose.

T seemed to him a very long time before he was summoned back to her.

She was white to the lips as they sat down again together, but she was a woman of strong will and her voice was steady when she spoke to him.

"How in the world, Peter, did you come by this

paper?" she began.

He told her briefly of his summer at the farm and of his investigation of the haunted room. He did not, however, mention his nightly seances with Eunice. Miss Wolcott was nothing if not conventional.

"You believe this story?" Her questions were abrupt and sharp.

"I do. Do you?"

"I am open to conviction. And you would tell me that this paper remained undiscovered all these years and that my niece has been kept by this farmer's family, knowing nothing of her origin? You say you met her at this farm?"

"Yes."

"The proof of her identity offered here?" she demanded.

He drew from his pocket a small box and handed it to her. She quickly opened it and took out the chain and locket.

Her face grew whiter as she handled them and her voice was not steady when she spoke again.

"Oh! I—I remember this!—I remember clasping it about her little neck!"

She leaned her head on her hand for an instant. But she quickly rallied.

"And the other proof?" she questioned.

"It is there."

"The two little moles under her ear?"

"I saw them."

"Tell me of the girl."

Her tone was tense with anxiety. Was it the prospect of losing her wealth, or her fear of hearing an unwelcome account of her niece that drew those deep lines about her strong mouth?

"She has been brought up in the farmer's family—not quite as a member of the family—"

"I should hope not!"

"But rather as their servant."

She sank back in her chair, looking as though he had struck her in the face.

"What do you mean?"

"She has done every sort of menial work to pay them for giving her a home. She has been a domestic drudge for them."

He felt that he was cruel, but he was speaking

advisedly, and at least his *purpose* in putting the case so brutually was merciful—to both Eunice and her aunt.

"A servant! To a farmer's family! My niece!"

As she spoke, Kinross had a sudden mental picture of Eunice transplanted into this house (her own house really). He saw the girl in all her exquisite delicacy of face and form, her grace, her thrilling voice, her natural dignity—in contrast to Miss Wolcott's funny, dumpy little figure, abrupt manner and almost coarse features.

"The girl would appear distinguished beside her!" he thought.

"Then she is a crude, uneducated country girl, quite unfit for decent society?" she demanded.

"It depends upon what you mean by 'decent."

"Is she quite hopeless?—or could something possibly be done for her?"

"Her blood ought to tell for something," he said, not without a touch of malice.

"Unless she has been ruined by her environment. And it would be too late, now, to make up for her lack of education. Of course they never sent her to school?"

"Not after she was twelve years old."

"Gracious!"

"She has never been away from the farm—except," he stoically added, "to go with her foster-

parents to town to market, to sell vegetables, butter and eggs, 'smearcase,' 'apple-butter,' 'pon-haus,' 'snits' and sauerkraut."

She gazed at him speechless.

"Let her have it!" he thought. "It will do her good. If she does the right thing, she will find out for herself what the child really is."

"What would the poor girl do with wealth?" she asked in a hollow voice. "You say she is utterly

unfit to use it?"

"I have seen many rich people no better fitted."

His eyes were constantly drawn to the "Confession" which she firmly held in her lap. He had an apprehension that at any moment he might see her tear it into shreds and defy him to do his worst! Yet an inborn instinct of courtesy—stronger than his vaunted cynicism—made it impossible to him to ask her for the paper until he had given her every chance to return it voluntarily.

"A fine lawyer I'd make!" he sneered at himself.

"Then," she continued, "granting, for the sake of argument, that I believed this paper," tapping it with her finger, "I would at least have to try to civilise her somewhat before I turned over to her the control of her money. It would be an actual wrong to her to give it to her before she was somewhat prepared to use it rationally and decently."

"I think so."

"How would you suggest, from your knowledge of her, that I go about it?"

She put the question tentatively.

"You might travel with her. There's Europe, you know. Art galleries and cathedrals are very civilising. So considered, I believe."

"I can't understand, Peter Kinross, how you can jest about a thing which you must see touches me to the quick—in my most vulnerable spot—my family pride."

"But you know I always did think you pampered that vulnerable spot. And pampered things get spoilt. A little exposure of the spot won't hurt it."

"The girl is of age—she might not consent to my patronage. She might want to take things into her own hands at once. Can't you," she urged, "give me *some* idea of what she is like?"

"I prefer to leave your mind unprejudiced to

judge for yourself."

"She must be dreadful!"

"I don't see that that follows."

"Else you'd reassure me. You wouldn't let me suffer such dread as I shall suffer from now until I know the worst."

"Clothes make a lot of difference, you know," he said consolingly. "At least I know women think so. Dress her up. That will help."

She ignored his flippancy. "How do you think she will take it—the news that she's an heiress?"

"Then you acknowledge her claims?" he quickly asked.

"She 'claims' the money of course?"

"She knows nothing about it. I have not even told her her name."

"Why have you not?"

"I thought it best to find out first whether you would credit my story. It would have been cruel to raise her hopes of being an heiress—only to disappoint them in case you are unwilling to make over to her her father's fortune."

"Unwilling? Is it a question of my being willing or unwilling?" she asked with a touch of

bitterness.

"I must tell you that however sure you and I might feel of her identity, the legal proof is too weak to establish any claims——"

She looked at him keenly. "Well? What are

you driving at?"

"No one can force you to part with a dollar of this money."

"Indeed!"

"That is my conviction."

"It is very interesting," she said, shrugging her shoulders.

He looked at her dubiously.

"I think I see your point," she added.

"I believe I've lost it myself," he declared. "just what is it anyway? Help me out."

"You are doing me the honour to believe me capable of withholding my niece's fortune; of being unwilling to make restitution to her."

"I am presupposing nothing, Miss Wolcott,"

he hastily affirmed—not quite candidly.

"I do not deny that your news is bitter to me. But, Dr. Kinross, the prospect of losing the money is the least part of the bitterness."

"Is the discovery of a niece so great a

calamity?"

"I suppose I can't expect you to appreciate my feelings about the way my brother's child has been reared," she said with a dignified melancholy.

"I think I do appreciate them, Miss Wolcott."

"Not so much, Peter, as you think you appreciate my loss of money."

" I merely pointed out to you that there could be

no legal compulsion in the case."

"Compulsion! Don't you think you use strange expressions? You said you believed this girl to be my niece. I tell you, now, I also believe it. How, then, can there be any talk of 'compelling' me to return to her her father's money, of which she has been deprived for twenty years? What the loss of the money may mean to me—" she dismissed that side of it with another shrug, though she was very pale.

Kinross sprang to his feet and held out his hand. "Miss Wolcott, blood does tell! If you were a

man, I'd call you a bully fellow! You renew my long-lost faith in womankind!"

"Because you discover that I'm not a scoun-

drel?"

"You have a most uncomfortable way of making a fellow feel small!"

"Sit down and talk sense. We must decide what is best to do with the girl. You have not told me how you think she will take it when she learns she's an heiress."

"Now, do you know, I've not the least idea. I'm curious myself to find out."

"Do you think it will turn her head?"

"She is incredibly unsophisticated and ignorant of life—so much so that she will probably not realise at all what it means in a worldly way, to come into great wealth. So, if you manage her wisely, you may save her from having her head turned."

Miss Wolcott sighed heavily. "It seems to me

I have a Herculean task on my hands."

"I suppose," said Kinross gravely, "I have seemed heartless in my way of bringing you this unwelcome news. But believe me, I do most sincerely feel the disaster that it is to you. Not," he quickly added, "in the discovery of your niece, but in the loss to you of wealth which you have enjoyed so long that I don't see how you are going to get on without it."

"I managed to worry through thirty years of

my life without it—so I suppose I can do it again," she curtly dismissed that phase of the matter.

A victoria containing two ladies had driven in at the gateway and was coming up the drive. Kinross rose and took up his hat from a table close by.

"We will arrange details to-morrow morning?" she asked as he held out his hand. "I shall have the girl come to me as soon as possible," she announced stoically.

"I wish I were a mediæval knight! I want to bend the knee to you and kiss your hand!"

"Your enthusiasm at finding me honest is positively insulting, Peter Kinross!"

"Miss Wolcott, I believe in my heart that you will not be ashamed of the girl. I believe you will love her."

"Indeed! But what you believe could have no weight with me, you know, your standards are so impossibly absurd!"

With this exchange of civilities they cordially shook hands and Kinross took his leave.

XXII

In the uncontrollable restlessness that possessed her during the dragging days while she waited for Dr. Kinross' return, Eunice became so "doplig" (awkward) that she proved a sore irritant to her already outraged foster-mother.

"Can't you watch what you're about oncet?" would be demanded of her a dozen times a day, when, in her distraught state, she would spill, break, burn, or otherwise destroy. "What's got into you these couple days back? You don't do nothin' right! What do you think Pop'll say at your leavin' all them pie git spoilt? I ast you did you take 'em to the spring-house and you sayed yes, you did—and then here this morning there they stood standing!—in this here hot kitchen all night yet! Pop'll jaw somepin turrible!"

It was in the occasional brief respite from toil in the evening hour, just before bedtime, that her unrest became feverish, maddening; and one night it governed her to the point of driving her to seek at least a moment's diversion from her unbearable heart-hunger in an unprecedented act. On her return from the spring-house, where she had gone to finish her last bit of the day's drudgery, she deliberately sat down with the two young ladies on the

porch steps.

Miss Ellery had become an object of engrossing interest to Eunice since Dr. Kinross had told her that he "loved Georgiana." Georgiana herself had, in the past few days, observed the scrutiny she underwent whenever she was in Eunice's presence. The girl seemed to watch every movement she made, to hang upon every word she uttered, in a way which secretly gratified Georgiana's love of ascendency.

"What's the matter, Eunice?" asked Daisy in surprise and curiosity, as Eunice joined them, for the farm-girl had seemed, during all their stay at the farm, to shrink from any intercourse with them.

"Have you and Abe had a scrap?"

"A scrap of what?"

Daisy squealed. "You know, Eunice, the course of true love never runs smooth, so to be sure, you and Abe must expect to have rows now and then. Is it in Shakspere, Georgiana, or the Bible? But never mind—no doubt Eunice knows! I can't account for your favouring us with your society, Eunice, unless you've been fighting with Abe and are wanting to be sympathised with. I'm sorry to say I can't oblige you. I couldn't possibly sympathise with a girl who would or could take an interest in Abe—a brute who thinks a woman's a pack-horse! Oh, that kind of a man! How I'd

love to stand on my hind legs and jump at him! Eunice," she said earnestly, "you're too nice a girl for Abe. Choke it off. You don't need to throw yourself away on a chump like Abe—a girl like you!"

Eunice, gazing fixedly at Georgiana, made no comment upon Daisy's advice.

"Would you object if I asked you a question?"

she inquired timidly of Georgiana.

"Certainly not," Georgiana smiled kindly. "Ask me what you like, Eunice."

"How do you occupy your time when you are

at home?"

- "Up to now," Georgiana answered, "I have spent all my life in school and college. Now I am going to take my place at the head of my father's home. As he is a college president, my life will be more or less public. And of course I shall do a good deal of work in our Woman's Club. I would prefer to take up a career. But my father really needs me, and so," she concluded heroically, "I am willing to make the sacrifice."
- "A career? What sort of a career would you like to follow?"
- "If I consulted only my own inclination, I would go on studying, take my degree in philosophy, and teach."
- "Teach!" exclaimed Eunice with repressed excitement. "You think it a desirable occupation?"

"There is no higher work," Georgiana answered

earnestly.

"There are some young women," answered Eunice, "to whom it would appear a pale drab. And some men wouldn't wish it to their 'meanest enemy."

Georgiana regarded her with a puzzled surprise. "What makes you think so, Eunice?"

"So I have been told."

"There is no nobler work!" Georgiana insisted with enthusiasm.

"Excuse me!" objected Daisy. "I'd rather take in stairs to scrub! If you want to know what I'm going to do, Eunice, now that my education is finished——"

"Finished?" questioned Georgiana with gentle

irony.

- "Anything more that's done for it, Georgiana, will have to be a passive process—I refuse to cooperate. I've monkeyed with myself long enough trying to 'develop' my 'latent possibilities.' Anything further in that line has got to be accomplished through a process of absorption—by means of my contact with you and uncle. Meantime, I'm going to sit in the market, Eunice—the matrimonial market of course. I'm down to the highest bidder!"
- "Daisy!" Georgiana pleaded with her, "if contact with me has given you no higher ideal than that——"

"Oh, it's easy for you to talk, Georgie!" Daisy retorted plaintively; "your market is made!"

"What do you mean, Daisy?"

"You're as good as engaged already to Dr. Kinross!"

Eunice had a sensation as though the earth were suddenly floating out from under her. What did it mean—Daisy speaking of "Dr. Kinross"? Was his disguise a pretence and did these girls know him otherwise than as "Pete"? What was this which Daisy had said?—"You are as good as engaged to Dr. Kinross!" And he had told her that he "loved Georgiana." Eunice felt herself floating amid clouds of illusion.

Georgiana laughed, and looked rather pleased. "I'm afraid your assumptions are quite gratuitous, my dear."

"Well, at least, there isn't the least doubt as to what his feelings will be," Daisy predicted. "You'll do him brown! He won't be able to help himself—no matter how much he'd like to be a misogynist, or whatever-you-call-'em."

"I'm not so sure," Georgiana protested, but she

laid her hand affectionately on Daisy's arm.

"But you may be sure," Eunice spoke with a half gasp, and almost without volition. "He does love you!"

"What?" Daisy turned upon her.

"Yes, Dr. Kinross does love her."

Eunice's voice sounded hollow to herself. She

was dazed. There was a dull dead weight upon her heart, an undefined, but keen, keen sense of loss and pain. Dr. Kinross and Georgiana were "as good as engaged"!

"He says he loves you," she repeated mechani-

cally.

There was a sob in her throat that ached intolerably. She felt an imperative need to get away by herself. She suddenly sprang up, and before the other two girls could collect themselves, she was gone.

For an instant surprise held both of them

silent.

"She's a little bit off the top!" declared Daisy.

"What could she have meant?" wondered Georgiana.

"I can't get aboard!" said Daisy. "I don't think she knew herself. I always did think that girl acted as if she had wheels!"

"If Pete were still here, I would ask him what he knows about her. She is singular," Georgiana agreed. "But what could she have meant?"

"She never saw Kinross and Kinross never saw

you. She was talking through her hat!"

"Of course," Georgiana again agreed reluctantly. It would be so much more interesting if Daisy's conclusion were not so inevitable—if Eunice had not been "talking through her hat."

Meantime, Eunice, alone in the "haunted"

chamber, seated on the side of the bed and staring with unseeing eyes into the darkness of the room, groped in a greater darkness of soul, as she tried, in her blind ignorance of life, to understand her own great desolation.

Engaged to be married! What did marriage mean to men like him? She had an unhappy knowledge of what it meant to such as Abe and the other countrymen about here. But to a man like Dr. Kinross—a man with an intellect and a soul as well as a body—would not marriage mean something different to such as he?

Suddenly a hot wave of realisation swept over her. Some burning lines of Browning's came to her mind:

"Be a god—and hold me with your charm.

Be a man—and hold me with your arm."

Eunice sank down upon the bed, and buried her face deep in the pillow. To her trembling heart only one thing was clear. That which, in the days just past, had made the sun in the heavens shine for her as it had never shone before,—that was over. He belonged to another—what had he to do with her or she with him? She was alone—utterly and absolutely alone.

XXIII

AT five o'clock in the afternoon two days later, Kinross was once more with the assembled Morningstars in the farm-kitchen, the entire family, including Eunice, being present at the important interview he was having with them.

The withdrawal of Georgiana's all-pervading presence from the farm had made the family seem to Kinross, on his return, quite shrunken and small.

He had wondered how, after his few days' absence and his fresh contact with the world, Eunice would appear to him from the point of view of his own and her aunt's world; and it seemed to him now, as he looked at her sitting opposite him at the kitchen table, that she was even more detached from her environment than he had at first thought her and far more akin to his own and her aunt's sphere of life than to that of the farm—to which, indeed, she seemed entirely alien.

He fancied to-day that the habitual melancholy of her eyes was intensified. But surely the great news he had for her would quickly dissipate it, and the original "pale drab" of her existence change to rosy hues—perhaps, alas, to lurid ones—

for in his heart he felt not a little misgiving as to the possibly baneful effect of her seeming good fortune.

Before returning, he had sent a message ahead of him to Mr. Morningstar, warning him to be ready, against his arrival, to pay over to Eunice, immediately, the sum of three thousand dollars, or be prepared to accept the consequences.

The effect of this communication had been to lead the Morningstars to urge upon Eunice, once more, the suit of Abe, but neither their persuasions nor their anger had succeeded in moving her.

On his arrival, he had of course insisted upon seeing Eunice alone. But he had met with such violent opposition to this, from both Mr. and Mrs. Morningstar, that even the girl herself drew back, unwilling to brave the storm that would follow her open defiance. He saw that a part, at least, of what he had to tell her of her affairs would have to be told in the presence of the family. Surely his news would make her able to throw off the last vestige of her yoke.

So, first, he had forced Morningstar, under the lash of his threats, to sign, in a cold perspiration of horror, the draft for three thousand dollars (which, in fact, represented at least a fourth of his possessions) and pass it over to the bewildered Eunice.

"Now, Mr. Morningstar," he began, when

this transaction had been completed, leaving the farmer utterly shaken out of his orbit, "I have a piece of news for you and your wife—and for Eunice."

Eunice's face was pale and her eyes, intent upon his face, were burning bright. He wished that he had the power to read all her thoughts, unique young creature that she was! It was distasteful, even painful, to have to break his news to her in the presence of these people who, indeed, seemed her natural enemies, but it was apparently unavoidable.

"What's your news?" Mrs. Morningstar curtly demanded, her curiosity getting the better of her rage against him; and her husband, too, bitter as was his chagrin, looked up keenly, suspicious of further calamity.

"When I spent the night in the haunted room, I made some discoveries. I found out, as you know, about the four thousand dollars belonging to Eunice. I found out also some other things."

He paused an instant. They all waited breathlessly.

"The man and woman who left Eunice here were not her parents."

"Now!" exclaimed Mrs. Morningstar, "you ain't tellin' us that!"

"Och, my souls!" breathed Ollie. "Forevermore!"

"Kin you prove it?" demanded Mr. Morningstar sullenly.

"What did they do with havin' her, then, along with 'em?" cried Mrs. Morningstar.

"They had stolen her from her home."

"Well, I never!" exclaimed Mrs. Morning-

star, her eyes bulging.

"I had wished to talk to Eunice of this and other details, alone. But as you made that impossible, I'll give you the bare facts now—after which," he added in a tone of authority, "Eunice will come with me to hear in private what concerns no one but herself."

The Morningstars stared resentfully, but no one answered.

"Her father," Kinross went on, "was W. W. Wolcott of New York. He was a man of large means. Eunice was his only child. Her aunt, Miss Wolcott of Washington, who believed her to be dead, has meantime had possession of the fortune rightfully belonging to Eunice. She is ready, now, to make restitution."

"Kin you prove it?" Abe here repeated his father's demand.

"How did you find it out?" asked Morning-star.

"Haunted rooms reveal secrets," Kinross answered with a solemnity that made the family shudder, to a man.

"How much is comin' to her?" inquired Abe covetously.

"A very great fortune."

While the family gaped, speechless, he rose from the table and moved around to Eunice's side.

"Miss Wolcott," he said, holding out his hand,

"I congratulate you."

It took the Morningstars a long time to grasp it and Eunice herself seemed dazed by it. She had not the least conception of what a great fortune meant. Kinross found her childlike acceptance of the stupendous fact both refreshing and amusing.

It required a vast deal of explaining before he could make them all even begin to understand the discovery he had made. Mr. and Mrs. Morningstar were loud in their comments and questions. Even Ollie overcame her habitual shyness before him and became articulate. Only Eunice had nothing to say, as she sat motionless, with her eyes fixed upon his face, when again he took his chair opposite her.

"Now just to think!" heavily breathed Mrs.

Morningstar. "Who'd 'a' thunk it?"

"Och, it minds me of that there story of Cinderella; ain't?" Ollie appealed to Kinross, taking courage, under the excitement of the occasion, to display her knowledge of literature.

"Now see what you done me, Mom!" exclaimed Abe bitterly, "with your always jawin'

Eunice fur makin' up to me! See what you cheated me out of! If you'd of left us be, look at what I'd be comin' into!"

"Yes, anyhow!" Mr. Morningstar also bitterly reproached his wife.

But Mrs. Morningstar turned on the latter resentfully. "Just as if you wasn't always agin it as much as me!"

"I only thought they oughtn't to engage to marry till they was *sure* oncet," he declared.

"Well, if you ain't——" but she checked herself judiciously. "That's all I meant too!" she also declared, turning appealingly to Eunice.

But the girl did not reply. Mrs. Morningstar sighed heavily.

"But look at here!" suddenly cried Mr. Morningstar, "it'll spite that there aunt somepin turrible to have to give up the money after her havin' it all this time and thinkin' it's hern!"

"I guess too!" agreed his wife.

Eunice glanced an inquiry at Kinross. "Will it leave my aunt poor?"

"Comparatively. Not what you have been accustomed to call poor."

The girl looked thoughtful, but said no more.

"Under these circumstances, Mrs. Morningstar," Kinross continued, "you understand you will of course have to part with Eunice."

Mrs. Morningstar started as if dodging a blow.

Would this man never have done with tormenting and robbing them?

"You think you're a-goin' to take her away, do

you?" she exclaimed fiercely.

"Why," he smiled, "even you could scarcely expect her to remain here now."

"I ain't leavin' her go!" she stoutly maintained, evidently not yet realising at all the significance of what she had heard.

Kinross drew a purse from his pocket and taking out some bills, laid them before Eunice. "Your aunt gave me this money to give to you for your expenses until you join her in New York."

The girl's eyes opened wide. "I am to go to my aunt?" she breathlessly asked. "My aunt! It seems so strange," she said, her face flushing, a quiver in her voice that revealed pitifully her lifelong loneliness, "to feel that there is some one in the world belonging to me!"

"Your aunt expects to send her secretary, Mrs. Kenyon, a widow, down here for you next week to take you back with her to New York. This money, she instructed me to tell you, you can use in getting yourself some clothing for your journey, with the help of Mrs. Kenyon. When you are with your aunt, she will do everything in the world for your welfare, I know."

"Eunice!" cried Abe, starting up, "you ain't a-goin' away to stay away—ain't not, you ain't?"

he pleaded. "Och, Eunice, if you'd say yes to me I'd leave you hire the washin' with the money wot your Pop inherited to you—and I'd leave you spend at the cloes all you wanted—and we'd go a good bit, too—to circuses and county fairs—and even to the Rooft Garden in town. We could afford to with your havin' such a lot yet! Why, I guess we could afford 'most anything! Won't you say yes to me?"

Eunice slowly turned her eyes upon him. "Say 'ves' to you now-with freedom-freedom just at my hand? Marry you and remain a bond-slave —with my heart still crying out as it has done all my life, 'Who will deliver me from the body of this death '? Tie myself to you,—when liberty and the wide world lie before me? Oh, Abe," she exclaimed, "if the thought of marrying you was horrible to me while I was under your mother's and father's tyranny, how must it look to me now that I am free—free to live, to be myself, to feed the hunger of my mind and soul with all the beauty of the world? Marry you, Abe?" A little rippling laugh broke from her lips. Kinross felt his brain beat with the shock of the joy that suddenly surged up in his heart at the revelation of her wordswhile he mentally pronounced himself an ass for his stupidity in not having realised the impossibility of her caring for Abe.

"Ty-rantry!" exclaimed Mr. Morningstar, tak-

ing up her words, while Abe looked dazed; "after all me and Mom done fur you—and our son even wantin' to marry you and us urgin' it—and givin' you back your three thousand dollars—"

The draft for that money was in her hand. She suddenly broke in upon his speech by holding it out

to him.

"Take it back. I know how you have suffered in having it forced from you. And I don't need it. Take it as payment for my board during the re-

mainder of my stay here."

Mr. Morningstar almost pounced upon it, while his small eyes gleamed. "That ain't no more'n right, seein' you don't need it and me I couldn't rightly spare it." He glanced triumphantly at Kinross. "You thought you was wonderful smart—ain't?—gittin' this here money off of me! But I got ahead of you that there time!"

Kinross gave a short laugh. "I'm satisfied with

my work," he said.

"Eunice, you ain't goin' to act so ongrateful as to leave right in the middle of cannin' season!" exclaimed Mrs. Morningstar, with a momentary return to her habitual asperity towards the girl. "You could put off goin' to your aunt till a couple weeks a'ready anyhow! How is me and Ollie goin' to get through all, without you? And mebbe if you stayed on a couple of weeks you'd come to see it some different about Abe too."

"Just as soon as the lady whom my aunt is sending for me can take me away, I shall go."

"Well, if you don't call that actin' mean—right in the middle of cannin' the tomats, too, yet!"

"Och, Mom, you talk dumm!" said her husband with a disgusted turning of his back on her and flinging his words behind him at her. "With a fortune waitin' fur her at New York over, what would she do with stoppin' to help with our cannin' the tomats! She kin afford to buy canned tomats out of the grocery stores and won't have to bother no more with puttin' up. I know what a big fortune means to a person, if you don't! I knowed a man out West was worth worse'n fifty thousand dollars yet!"

Again Mrs. Morningstar sighed heavily. "Eunice," she said, changing her tone to motherly persuasiveness, "you'll come to see us now and again, ain't? You would like to come home where you was raised, still, ain't you would?"

Eunice looked at her and shook her head almost shudderingly.

"Never!"

"Ain't you got no gratefulness?" Mrs. Morn-

ingstar exclaimed in despair.

"But what," the girl asked gently, "have I to be grateful to you for? It seems to me I have much—very much more—to forgive. With four thousand dollars left to me, why was it not per-

mitted to me to have even the little education that the district school might have given me? But there," she added, "you didn't realise the wrong you did me. And it is all in the past. And I have already turned my back upon my past."

"You're turnin' your back on us now, are you?" said Ollie darkly. "We ain't good enough fur you now, are we-since you're got so wonderful rich all of a suddent? I guess you wouldn't even send me a new dress from town oncet in so often. to pay fur all the old ones I gev you a'ready!"

Again that little ripple of laughter from Eunice. "Would you like me to send you my clothes after I have no more use for them, Ollie?" she inquired, a touch of gaiety in her voice and a bright colour coming into her pale cheeks. "Why certainly, I will."

"If you can't send me a new one now and again, I don't want your old ones!" Ollie retorted.

"You may draw on me, Ollie, for all the silk dresses you can wear!" Eunice said recklessly.

Ollie's eyes sparkled. "Look at here, Eunice,

do you mean that fur really?"

Upon Eunice reassuring her, Ollie's look of complacency proclaimed her resignation to the turn events had taken, since she herself was not altogether shut out from a share in them.

"Eunice, will you come with me now?" Kinross asked, again rising, and feeling buoyant in the liberty which the new circumstances gave him, to talk with her unrestrainedly and when and where they both would, independently of the government which had made her so inaccessible. "I have some things to discuss with you."

Eunice rose at once, the pensiveness of her countenance momentarily lifting, as even his good news for her had not caused it to do.

"You haven't the dare to go; there's supper to make!" interposed Mrs. Morningstar from force of habit, not realising yet that her reign was over.

Eunice walked to the door which Kinross was holding open for her. "I am afraid you and Ollie will have to get on without me," she said, turning at the threshold. "I have paid my board, you know, for the rest of the time I shall be here—three thousand dollars up to the end of next week. As a boarder, of course you can't expect me to do any work."

"If you don't work, you don't eat!" snapped Mr. Morningstar viciously, the family habit of browbeating the girl getting the better of his prudence, for he knew, of course, that it was unwise to further offend one who had become so rich. "This here three thousand dollars ain't payin' fur your board, fur it ain't yourn to give—it was mine in the first place—extorted out of me by force! So you just come on in here and help Mom git supper, or you don't eat!"

He emphasised his words by lifting his hand which held the draft, and instantly the valuable strip of paper was drawn out of his fingers. Kinross passed it on to Eunice.

"If I may offer a word of advice, don't pay your board in advance, Eunice. Wait until you

are ready to leave."

Eunice, smiling, tucked the paper into the bosom of her calico gown, and in the face of the blank and utter consternation of the family, the two walked away, Kinross calling back over his shoulder, "Give us a good supper when we come in, and we will pay accordingly. Poor grub, small pay! We'll be back in an hour probably."

XXIV

HEY strolled about together in the near-by woodland, in the late summer afternoon. There was so much, still, that had to be gone over and explained; yet Kinross found himself quite neglecting the prosaic details which ought to have been discussed, and dwelling upon the far more absorbing theme of the girl herself, leading her skilfully to those fascinating self-revelations which she made with such child-like openness and which, because of her refreshing and unique genuineness, set her apart, in his fancy, from all the rest of her "false, artificial sex."

Yet just now, as she walked at his side, there was a vague sense of disappointment in his heart. His explanation, given to her while they walked, of her aunt's noble courage in at once giving up the fortune to her, without hesitation or protest, and her readiness to return to comparative poverty, did not bring the response he had hoped for—an offer to share with the elder woman her quite superfluous thousands. He tried not to blame her, in his heart, for this, but to attribute it to her ignorance both of money and of what the tie of blood meant.

All would come right, he was sure, when she had had a little experience of life—if (and it was a large if) the sudden reaction from a life of self-abnegation to one of power and luxury did not make her selfish.

He was puzzled at the indifference she manifested when he tried to draw her into any talk of her prospective new life. Not indifference only; it seemed actually to make her sad. One would suppose she would delight in dwelling upon the glories that awaited her. Had she not extolled, in her outburst to Abe, her freedom to roam at large "o'er all this scene of man"?

"What is it?" he suddenly questioned her. "Does your heart fail you at the strangeness of it all? But a girl that can brave a ghost ought to have courage to cope with mere mortals!"

She did not reply.

"Think of it," he urged, "the world is before you, with youth, wealth, freedom—and," (should he put the idea into her unspoiled mind?)—"and you're not bad looking, either, Eunice—and that means a lot to a woman?"

She lifted her drooping head and scanned him from head to foot. He, too, was not bad looking.

"Does it mean more to a woman than to a man?"

"It's everything to a woman. A man—only so he hasn't a hump!" he shrugged.

"Do you mean that is your opinion? Or only

the opinion of the world?"

He smiled. "The mere world—as over against Me? I fear you exaggerate the importance of my opinions! Well, I never seriously asked myself the question before—but now that it's put to me—yes, I do think good looks essential to a woman. Why, naturally!"

"Essential? Essential to what?"

"To her being interesting—and attractive."

"There was George Eliot, you know. At least I suppose you know."

"Oh, of course when a woman is a genius."

"The Greeks thought manly beauty—not the feminine—the highest type."

She was such a combination, he inwardly smiled,

of ignorance and learning!

"Oh, but the Greeks! That was a while back a'ready, as 'Pop' Morningstar would say."

"Mere prettiness seems to me of little moment."

"It is. That isn't what I mean. But a woman must be interesting looking—not a guy. She must be pleasing."

"You mean in order to attract the male?"

He couldn't help it—he bent back his head and laughed. "You think that of little moment too?" he asked, quickly sobering as he met her astonishment. "But," he shrugged again, "it seems to be what they're all occupied in doing."

"Are they?" she asked in the wistful way she

had of appealing to him.

"It is pitiable, I suppose. But then," he lifted his eyebrows, "what would you have them be at?"

- "Your Georgiana would prefer, she told me, the career of a student and a teacher, rather than a domestic life."
- "My Georgiana?" he repeated in consternation. "Now why, may I inquire, do you call her mine?"
- "You said you loved her," she answered faintly, her eyes on the ground.
- "Oh!" he nodded, enlightened. That frivolous remark of his had evidently given her much food for speculation. Would he better tell her he'd only been fooling? But she wouldn't understand or see the point (what was the point, anyway?) and somehow he felt an awkwardness in explaining to her that he had lied to her. A more pointless joke he had surely never perpetrated.

"Georgiana deceives herself," he said. "Georgiana would like to be fallen in love with—just like Ollie or any other girl. You'll like it yourself,

some day, Eunice. See if you don't."

"You think Miss Ellery is all those things you admire—' interesting-looking,' 'not a guy,' 'pleasing'?"

"Don't you think she is?"

"I think her beautiful and graceful."

"Of course she is."

Her head went a little lower as she walked at his side for a moment without speaking.

"Are you afraid of your future, Eunice?" he

persisted.

A faint colour came into her face. "One thing I am afraid of," she softly answered. "Of a lone-liness worse than I have ever known."

"That may be for a little while. But it will pass. You will find a companion in your aunt. You will make friends too. And after a while, inevitably, there will be a lover—or rather lovers."

"You think my aunt will like me?" she asked

uncertainly.

"How can she help it?"

"You think I am, then, likeable?"

"I like you!"

"Oh!" she caught her breath. "Do you?"

He felt himself stirred by the soft thrill in her voice. But in some respects he was the stupidest of even his stupid sex, and he did not realise the emotion her words and tone expressed.

"And if I liked you," he tried to encourage her, "you'll get on with other people. I'm not considered a lamb. So don't you fancy you're going to

be lonely."

"But-shall I-ever see you?"

"Surely." He felt touched by her helpless,

childlike turning to him, her first and only friend. "I often go to New York and Washington, where your aunt spends her winters usually. But," he added, a touch of pathos in his tone, "you will soon learn to get on without me, though I seem so necessary to you now."

She made no comment—not even a polite protest.

"You afford me many pleasant surprises, Eunice," he suddenly remarked, knocking some brambles from her pathway with his cane. The gallantry, instinctive and unthinking with him, but understandable to her only through books, thrilled her in a way that would have amazed him if he had dreamed of it.

"Pleasant surprises?" she repeated with timid questioning.

"You know I thought all along that you were in love with Abe!"

She did not answer at once, as she walked with her eyes on the path before her.

"I was aware that you paid me that compliment," she presently spoke in a low voice.

"For which I owe you an apology. It was stupid of me. And very unflattering to your taste, I admit."

The fact was, he realised that his belief in her infatuation for Abe had been the only thing in his knowledge of her that had seemed to put her on a lower plane than the one on which, as "Miss Wolcott," she would henceforth move. The discovery of her aversion to the farmer's son had placed her, at a bound, at his side as his equal in every sense—no longer an ignorant country damsel to be indulgently patronised by him and her aunt.

"Why didn't you tell me you despised the fellow?"

"It did not seem worth while explaining."

"Now you are complimentary! You did not care if I did think poorly of your taste?"

She hesitated. "It is not that I did not care," she faltered. "But what you couldn't see for yourself, it didn't seem useful to tell you."

It occurred to him to wonder whether her slightly unusual use of words, which was a constant source of pleasure and amusement to him, would annoy her aunt. In his opinion, when she lost it, she would have lost one of her charms.

"Then you did care?" he asked.

"Yes," she said simply.

" Why?"

She turned to him with a little deprecating smile and gesture, "You dissect me so! As though you were a scientist and I a specimen. Sometimes it seems to me cold-blooded!"

"And you don't like it?"

"It is rather interesting to hear what you will be asking next—and what the things are which you wish to find out."

"It flatters the egotism of most women if a man asks them to talk about themselves."

"Are women more egotistic than men? Fonder of talking about themselves?"

She asked it so simply, evidently seeking only to be instructed.

"What is your own idea about it?" he asked.

"There it is again—dissecting me until I feel myself in shreds!"

They both laughed and he could not drag his eyes from the sweetness of her face when she smiled.

"Do you know," she said musingly, "I have often wondered, when Abe has protested to me of his 'love,' and when I have read of it, what it is like. I have never loved any one. There seems to be a distinction between love and affection. Affection is said to be much milder. I don't even know what it is to feel affection."

The confession seemed almost appalling.

Suddenly she stopped short in the path, and looked at him. "All my life," she said earnestly, "I have had a heart-hunger that I have never understood—I did not know what it was I hungered and thirsted for—and what the great 'waste places' in my soul meant. But now—I believe,"

she hesitated, a troubled light in her eyes, as though she groped in dark confusion; "I believe I begin to understand. This strange feeling I have had towards you—ever since you first came here—even before we had ever spoken together—I believe it is—affection."

Kinross gazed at her spellbound. Was she not diverting?

"You dear child," he said, taking her hand in his as though she were ten years old instead of twenty, "you like me? And you find it a 'strange feeling'?"

"At times I have thought I must be mad. I am thinking about you every minute. I seem to have no other life save in the thought of you. It is like a possession, a frenzy. The time while you were away was a midnight blackness to me. Nothing seems to me worth while, except you! Is this," she asked, her voice trembling, "affection?"

The blood surged to Kinross' face. The girl loved him! He was the first man who had crossed the path of her maidenhood and he had come to her as a friend and benefactor—almost as the fairy god-mother!—and the result was inevitable—her fancy was fired and she was in love. It would not be fair to take her seriously—it was only a case of propinquity—she would outgrow it as soon as she met other men and could form some standards of measurement and comparison. One's

first experiences of the divine fire did not last—it was merely a preparation for the more sane and reasonable love of comparative maturity.

"I am the first friend you ever had," he told her, "and naturally, your feeling is intensified because all you are at present capable of is concentrated on one object."

He felt the absurdity of his "cold-blooded" analysis as his eyes met the fire of hers. But he went on:

"Wait until you have learned to know your aunt—and others—and have met with many people who are kind to you—and then no *one* person will so entirely fill your mind."

They walked on in silence and thoughtfulness. Kinross felt himself stirred to the depths of him. And yet, what his own feelings towards her might be, he did not even stop to consider, so accustomed he was to thinking of himself as invulnerable.

This, then, was why she had so fastened upon his flippant declaration that he "loved" Georgiana! Well, better that she should think so. The sooner would she get over this exaggerated state of feeling towards him. Though perhaps she must suffer a bit, for a few weeks, in the process, poor little girl! His heart softened to her with a wonderful tenderness.

"Will you tell me something?" she broke in

upon his musings. "Did you and Miss Ellery ever see each other before you met here?"

"No, Eunice."

"But she spoke of you when you were away, calling you 'Dr. Kinross.'"

"She knows of me."

"Are you, then, a man of fame?" she inquired with interest, though her voice had a note of melancholy deeper than her habitual pensiveness.

"Not outside the village in which I live,

Eunice."

He saw that she was looking deeply perplexed.

"What was it Georgiana said of 'Dr. Kinross'?" he inquired, not without a sneaking feeling that he was taking a mean advantage of Georgiana.

"Miss Parks, in that picturesque way she has of speaking, said to Miss Ellery, 'You will do him brown.' And 'You are as good as engaged to him.' But Miss Ellery seemed to have some doubts about it. She said, 'I am not so sure.'"

Her seriousness in repeating their absurdities was too much for Kinross—he grinned his enjoyment. "That was a mere figure of speech on Georgiana's part—she is quite confident of 'doing me brown."

"She seemed to have doubts. But I—I reassured her——"

"Oh, you did! What did you tell her, Eunice?"

"That you had told me you loved her."

He shouted a laugh. "You gave me away then?—told them 'Pete' was Dr. Kinross?"

- "No. I thought they must know it. I couldn't understand."
- "What did Georgiana say when you told her I loved her?"
 - "I-didn't wait to hear. I-I came away."

"Leaving them as puzzled, no doubt, as they left you," he said, growing sober with the realisation of the pain in the white, drawn face of the girl at his side. How strong her feeling for him must be when it could so overshadow the great news he had brought her and the brilliant future before her! His brain swam for a moment as he felt all the fascination of her sweet maidenhood. But he took himself in hand. "I won't undeceive her!" he said to himself. "I'll explain nothing. Even if I were in love with her, it wouldn't be fair to take advantage of her inexperience. Let her think I'm engaged to Georgiana!"

He abruptly changed the subject and forced her to talk prosaically of her life with her aunt, though his pulses were bounding with the excitement of his discovery, in her naïve baring of her heart.

And so at length, they strolled back to the farm-house.

XXV

of white cashmere, whose long graceful lines gave her a quite regal figure, was thoughtfully pacing the drawing-room of her home. It was just a week after the opening of the fall term of the college and President Ellery was going to hold his annual reception to-night for the members of the Faculty and their wives. Georgiana, now at home and at the head of her father's household, was ready to receive with him and do the honours as hostess.

As she paced the floor, her long skirts sweeping about her, her thoughts (serious, as usual) were occasionally broken in upon by the flippant remarks of Daisy who, also in gala attire, was ready to assist her this evening to receive her father's guests.

"Hadn't I better go and tell uncle to hurry up, Georgiana? They will begin to come soon," Daisy suggested from her place on an old davenport which stood against the wall.

"He will be down in time, I suppose—he has a watch," Georgiana answered absently.

"But can he tell the time?"

Georgiana ignored her.

"Because I've always suspected he couldn't, he's so invariably late to everything."

Georgiana's gaze was far away.

"You look stunning, Georgiana. That's a scrum gown."

"What adjectives, Daisy!"

"If the combination of you and that robe of snowy white doesn't roast Kinross, then he is fire-proof—as they all say he is."

Georgiana laughed indulgently.

- "I do hope, Georgie, that you'll be quite cruel to him to avenge the rest of them."
- "Daisy," Georgiana gently chided her, "you put it on such a low plane!"

"'It'? What's 'it'?"

- "My prospective acquaintance with Dr. Kinross."
- "Oh, Georgiana! Why, I'm expecting it's going to be most inspiring and uplifting—to see you jilt him, you know."

"I'm not even sure that he's going to be here

to-night."

- "Oh!" said Daisy blankly. "Gracious! And here I'm standing on my hind legs in glad expectation!"
- "He wrote me that he had an engagement for part of the evening with a Miss Wolcott, who was

passing through town on her way to New York, but that if he might come early and leave early, he would be delighted to do so. The tone of his note," she added critically, "was manly."

"Dear me, how did he manage to be manly in

a note like that?"

"There was an atmosphere about it," Georgiana insisted.

"Why do you keep walking about, Georgie?

Are you nervous?"

Georgiana came and stood in front of the davenport.

"Daisy," she said earnestly, "he will probably

be the first one to arrive and—"

"Meaning Kinross?" Daisy inquired sympathetically.

"Dr. Kinross, yes. I fancy he will be here before any one else comes. Tell me—if you were I, would you be in the room when he comes, or would you enter after he is here?"

"Which do I think would impress him more?"

"I merely mean," Georgiana explained, "would it seem more easy and—graceful—to be already in the room, or to come in after he is here?—or perhaps to enter from the piazza? Which would seem more—well,——"

"Effective? Suppose you advance from under the piano, Georgie!" Daisy flippantly advised,

growing hilarious.

"Daisy, why can't you look at the serious side of life sometimes?"

"Well, then, to be really serious, Georgiana, I don't think Kinross will be here first. That poor poodle, Gateshead, will present himself at the earliest possible moment—and stay until you will have to hint to him to flee as a bird to his mountain—that he may not lose one second of the time permitted to the Faculty to gaze upon your charms. And you, Georgiana, dear, will be meaner than ever to the poor suffering wretch, now that you have this Kinross on the brain so——"

"Absurd! Why, I've not even met Dr. Kinross!"

"But, Georgiana," said Daisy with unwonted earnestness, "it seriously does wound me (I am speaking quite in earnest) to see the way you handle that long-suffering Gateshead. Be nicer to him to-night than you were at the Gardner's dinner, won't you?—or I shall be tempted to console him by catching his heart on the rebound and allowing him to fall in love with me—and think of such a fate!—to let a man console himself with simple me after having loved the complicated Georgiana! 'Twould be an awful strain on me. He couldn't help realising constantly the lofty height from which he had tumbled and how he had stooped! You know really, Georgiana, you are cruel, I might say brutal, to Gateshead."

"His plane of life is so commonplace!" said Georgiana impatiently. "He does not stimulate me. He is not even receptive."

"He's a dear, honest, big-hearted fellow and loves you devotedly—and you snub him and sneer

at him-until my blood boils!"

"It is not I he loves—for the real I he does

not know or comprehend."

"I suspect that isn't grammatical, Georgiana, is it?" said Daisy doubtfully. "'He does not know or comprehend I'? To be sure, you ought to know—you went through Wellesley."

"What it is he thinks he loves, I'm sure I don't

know," said Georgiana.

"I'm sure I don't either, since you say it isn't the real I."

"I wish, Daisy," said Georgiana sadly, "that

the higher life appealed to you."

"And to think that you may commit Gateshead to spending his on my low plane, Georgiana!"

"He is certainly quite incapable of living on mine."

"I acknowledge he is weak, or he would have cut you long ago for the way you treat him. With his students, with every one but you, he is strong. With you he is nothing but a penny-dog. But now, to change the subject, I'm worried. Who is this Miss Wolcott (is that the name you said?) to see

whom, Kinross is leaving your radiant presence to-night?"

"I don't know," Georgiana answered with

dignity.

"You look worried too."

Georgiana shrugged her shapely shoulders.

"I wonder whether that man would do such an underhand thing as that!" Daisy speculated, not without indignation.

"As what? You are rather indefinite, Daisy."

"I don't know how to be more definite, I'm sure."

Georgiana had to let it rest at that, for at this moment Mr. Gateshead was announced.

It was with more than her usual indifference that Georgiana received his obsequious greeting. Daisy, who looked on sympathetically, could not be sure that the deep flush which mounted to his forehead was due to the shock of ecstasy he received from Georgiana's beauty, so enhanced to-night by her extraordinarily becoming gown, or to his pain and embarrassment at her manner.

As she turned half away from him to a chair in the bay-window, he awkwardly sat down on the davenport deside Daisy. To relieve the situation, at least for the sake of her own feelings and Mr. Gateshead's, Daisy chatted vivaciously; but she met with a discouraging lack of response, for Mr. Gateshead was crushed and Georgiana quite unable

to force an interest in anything but the theme which just now absorbed her highest contemplation.

The announcement of another guest was very welcome to Daisy. The name "Dr. Kinross" sent a thrill of expectancy through the two feminine hearts in the room; but it gave to the love-sick man on the davenport a sharp pang of jealous apprehension, for Dr. Kinross' popularity with girls and women was so notorious as to be a source of mortification to himself.

It was still early and President Ellery had not yet come into the parlour, so Mr. Gateshead had to perform the ceremony of introduction.

Dr. Kinross in evening dress bore very slight resemblance, on a first glance, to Peter the farmhand. Miss Ellery came forward across the floor, holding out her beautiful hand, and met him in the middle of the room. Tall as she was, he stood head and shoulders above her as he clasped her offered hand. His face was quite grave as their hands and glances met.

Mr. Gateshead, looking on, as the two girls greeted Kinross, felt something electric in the air, something strange in the expectant, tentative look of Dr. Kinross' eyes upon Georgiana's upturned face.

"We have heard a great deal about Dr. Kinross," Georgiana said with gracious condescension,

speaking like a royal personage, in the plural. "His fame followed us even into our rural retreat this summer to a Pennsylvania Dutch farm, our letters from home discussing him as if——" she stopped short, her eyes fixed upon his face, her self-consciousness suddenly dropping from her like a cloak.

"Was it only his fame which followed you?" Kinross spoke. "Or was it you who followed him? I think he was there first, wasn't he?"

Georgiana stood transfixed, her eyes growing wider and wider with wonder and amazement; the shock of recognition had startled her out of herself and for the first time in his acquaintance with her, Kinross saw her before him unaffected, natural, herself—and for the first time, her face in its freedom from self-consciousness, seemed to him unqualifiedly beautiful. As for Daisy, she forgot herself so far as to grip Gateshead by the arm to keep herself from tottering.

"Yes," acknowledged Kinross in an apologetic tone, replying to Georgiana's speechless stare, "you're right. I'm Pete. Reproach me as much as you want to—I deserve a roasting, I know."

"But," she breathed, "how can you be? What

-what are you?"

"Gracious!" gasped Daisy. "Good gracious!"

"So many things," gulped Georgiana, her face colourless, "come to my mind to confirm it—

that you are Pete—I mean that Pete was you!"

"Oh!" cried Daisy, staring wildly, "Georgiana

and I called you Pete all summer! You!"

"That's my classic name."

"And all the while you were Dr. Kinross!" breathed Georgiana.

"And I lent you The Story of the Great Back-Boned Family! Oh!" shrieked Daisy hysterically.

"And didn't think me a shining success as a

farm-hand, did you?"

"I can't grasp it!" half-whispered Georgiana.

"It will come to you gradually, no doubt," he consoled her.

"That we were under the same roof with you for four weeks and never dreamed of it—of who you were," she amended her remark. "How did you manage it?"

"It wasn't very difficult," he answered, not in-

tending an aspersion on their intelligence.

"I never dreamed of suspecting anything! How could I," she said, looking dazed, "when you used bad English and washed at the pump?—though I remember you always had a separate towel—but you ate with your knife!"

"One can rise superior to a mere prejudice like

a fork, Miss Ellery, in a good cause."

"' Miss Ellery'? Why don't you call her

Georgie?—she calls you Pete!" madly suggested Daisy.

Georgiana, flushing, glanced haughtily at Daisy. "A good cause?" she quickly repeated. "That's just the point. What was the cause? Why did you deceive us?"

"It's up to you, Peter, to explain satisfactorily your gay deception!" said Daisy. "If you aren't the limit! Of all the foxy tricks I ever heard of! Didn't I always say there was something foxy about you? I did! Well, talk it out with Georgie and I'll receive your apologies later—alone in the conservatory. Come, Mr. Gateshead, we'll leave them alone in this sacred moment of their coming to an understanding. Let's console each other."

She drew him away, scarcely heeded by Georgiana, though Kinross' glance followed them for an instant.

He laughed as his eyes returned to Georgiana's fixed gaze. "She's a jolly little fellow, isn't she?—I mean 'Daisy,'" he explained as Georgiana looked blank. "Shall we sit down and talk it out?"

Daisy had taken Gateshead to the bay-window, so Georgiana led the way across the room to the davenport.

As they sat down together, Kinross realised at once that her self-forgetfulness had passed and that she was again intensely conscious of herself, from the graceful poise of her head and the sweep of her skirts on the floor to every tone of her voice and curve of her lips.

"Now that she knows who I am," he thought, she'll recall the fact that Eunice told her I loved

her! What the devil's to pay?"

"Why," she inquired, "did you conceal your identity? If you chose to hire yourself out as a farm-hand for the summer you need not have been ashamed of it—I would only have honoured you for it. Your labouring in conjunction with Nature—I can quite understand how it satisfied a want in your soul. How little you understood me when you thought I would look down upon you for it!"

Kinross mentally sighed. She was being superior again—and patting him on the head for hiring out to old Morningstar and consorting with

Nature!

"It was so original of you!" she smiled, "quite idyllic, really! A farm-hand who read the Vedanta Philosophy of Swaimi Vivehananda, who took a half day off when he pleased, was treated by his employers like a privileged boarder, smoked fine cigars and had occasional relapses into good English!"

She was certainly carrying it off very easily, all things considered—more easily than he was, in fact. He was relieved at her interpretation of his escapade, for he would have found it rather difficult explaining his disguise if she had not done it for him.

"But how did we both happen to get to the Morningstar farm?" she suddenly asked. "You could not have known that I was going there, for I did not know it myself until the very day I went."

"Your supposing that I would have pursued you thither, if I had known, is certainly a compli-

ment to my taste," he bowed.

She looked at him with a slight suspicion in her eyes, and a faint colour came into her cheeks. But her native egotism blinded her to irony directed against herself.

"It was a strange coincidence, wasn't it?" she said; "but hardly fair," she added archly, "that you should have been taking me in—if you will pardon the slang—for four weeks without my knowing it."

"On the whole, you behaved very well, Miss

Ellery."

She looked so complacently sure of it that he could not help adding, "It remains, now, for us to discover whether or not we are 'on the same line of march,' whether we are 'at one' and can 'clasp hands'!"

She was not in the least discomposed by the allusion. The bright colour in her face was manifestly a glow of delight.

"You must necessarily be far in advance of

me," she answered; "you know me as I do not as yet know you; but give me time and I will catch up with you; and it is my belief that we shall find each other and meet very vitally."

"Heaven forfend!" was his mental comment, as they both rose, now, upon the entrance of the venerable President.

Other guests began to arrive and Kinross was obliged to leave her to her duties as hostess. He found Daisy and took her out to the campus for a stroll.

It was not until the supper hour gave Georgiana her first bit of respite from her obligations that he again found himself alone with her. She took advantage of her momentary leisure to invite him to her father's study where they could be by themselves to finish their talk.

He found himself eager to tell her all the wonderful story of Eunice, and no sooner were they alone than he began to relate it. To his surprise, he had a hard time to get her attention upon it, so bent she was upon talking of herself, upon learning what his impressions of her had been during those four weeks at the farm and upon drinking in the admiration which, evidently, she was sure she had inspired all unconsciously. If he led the talk away from these themes, her answers were vague and her countenance absent. There was nothing in the world so interesting to her as her-

self, and she was too self-absorbed to see or feel the mental attitude of another and to sense when she was being tiresome. In short, like all egotists, she lacked tact.

But Kinross politely persisted and at last succeeded in holding her attention upon his story long enough to excite her mild interest. She was very much surprised of course. She expressed, in conventional terms, some good wishes for the fortunate girl, moralised a bit about the situation, and then returned to the more important subject of herself.

When, after a half hour that had been all too short to satisfy Georgiana, they were obliged to come forth from their retreat in Dr. Ellery's study, her face was so beaming that Gateshead, when he saw her, was in despair, and as she moved through the rooms, her girl friends all decided that Kinross had certainly proposed on sight.

XXVI

FROM THE SENIOR MISS WOLCOTT TO DR. PETER KINROSS

Newport, September-

"She has been with me here at Newport for nearly three weeks, and this is my first opportunity, Peter, for writing to you. You must of course be curious to hear how things have gone with each

of us since the girl came to me.

"Of course after your non-committal account of her, I was prepared for the worst and had braced myself to meet the shock which my own niece's manners and appearance must give me. The bracing served me in good stead when she arrived, for the shock was even greater than I had counted on; though as it came from an unexpected direction, my being prepared to meet it did not count for so much as it would otherwise have done. Of course I knew Mrs. Kenvon would do all she could to soften the blow by fixing her up as to clothes. But from what you had told me of my niece's life, I could not reasonably have expected to see the graceful, exquisite-looking girl who walked into my drawing-room last Friday night. You know it is the expression of a face and not merely perfection of colouring and feature which saves it from being common. I thought she would look vacant and awkward—or else vulgarly loud and self-assertive. I was not prepared to see a face of extraordinary refinement and intelligence and to meet a manner of dignity and gentleness. Do you acknowledge now that blood will tell? At first I was inclined to be angry with you for not having spared me the suffering I endured in anticipating her coming. I thought you might have told me what she was like, how she had educated herself and so forth. But on second thoughts, I knew you had done wisely in leaving me to find it out for myself.

"The child is touchingly grateful to me for the motherly care—so new to her—which I confess I delight in lavishing upon her—and I need not tell you that two lonely, love-hungry hearts have found comfort in this newly-discovered tie of blood.

"When we came to talk of finances I was surprised at her quickness to understand business problems which were so entirely new to her. A trained intelligence, even when the training has been as one-sided as hers has been, helps so much in every direction. Against my protest, she has insisted upon an equal division between us of her father's wealth. I have absolutely refused to accept this until she has had at least one year's experience of life in the world, when she will understand something of the value of money.

"Even if I wished to, I don't think I could ever make a worldling of her. Each day she is with me I am impressed afresh with the purity and simplicity of her mind.

"It is a keener pleasure than I have known in many a long year to watch her impressions of things as I take her about with me—she is so filled with wonder at everything. She is like a small boy at his first circus! Her comments are often so funny and yet so unexpectedly wise. It will be delightful to take her to Europe.

"It isn't always easy to understand her. At times she seems absent and dreamy in a way that is quite unaccountable to me. There is a melancholy about her which she seems unable to shake off and which puzzles and troubles me, for surely she has everything to be happy for. Is it, perhaps, the sombreness of her past still clinging to her? Or, can it be possible that she is brooding over some country lover she left out there? If that were the case, you, Peter, having been by her all summer, would know. I wish you would tell me. Wouldn't it be tragic if that were the case?"

Miss Wolcott concluded with a warm expression of obligation to Dr. Kinross for his disinterested kindness.

It was this letter which had brought Dr. Kinross, after a bitter struggle with himself, to the

place where he was on this afternoon, late in the month of October—at Eunice's side walking with her in Central Park.

It was a bracing autumn day, but the fresh air was not alone responsible for the brilliant colour in Eunice's face and the light in her eyes. But the colour and the light suggested excitement rather than joy. There was a shadow of melancholy back of them.

In Kinross' face, too, the signs of his battle with

himself were deeply marked.

They walked slowly in a secluded path. The change he had felt in Eunice from the hour of their meeting that morning, had given him a sense of loss, as though the unsophisticated child who had trusted and liked him had slipped from him. For there was a dignity in her manner with him that almost made him think she had already grown conventional. And as for the deep feeling for him which, in their last talk together at the farm, she had so naïvely revealed—he shrugged his shoulders at the fickleness of the sex, for not a sign of it could he read in her new manner of reserve.

Now, however, that they were alone in the isolation of the great park, he had a sense of being nearer to her. She was unbending to him and opening up as she had not done all day.

"I am waiting to hear some of your first impressions, Eunice, of life in the great world," he said, as they strolled under the great trees which rustled in the autumn breeze.

"Perhaps," she answered, "when I am more adjusted to my new life and understand it better, the world may look very much less mournful and lamentable to me than it looks now. Yet I am happy! Life is full of wonder and beauty—and constant new delights. And remember, I never before knew the meaning of the word happiness!"

"Um-m! You are happy?" he repeated.

"I'm so glad to know it, Eunice."

"Of course one constantly sees things that sadden. No sooner am I deep in the enjoyment and interest of some pleasure than I am confronted with a sight of poverty that makes my own possessions seem wholly wrong. I didn't work for this money—why should I have it?"

"But your father worked for it," he said, knowing very well he was instilling false social

economy.

"That doesn't make it right," she shook her head.

"Perhaps not," he granted.

"I think," she went on, "that people would interest me more than anything else in the world if only they were real, were themselves; but I have yet to meet a man or woman of the world who seems to me genuine—except you and my aunt. And Aunt Eunice seems to be herself only

when we are alone. Perhaps," she suddenly looked up at him, "if I saw you with other people, you, too, would seem artificial to me, and to be acting a part."

"There's no telling, Eunice, what your un-

clouded eyes would see!"

"Some things seem so strange," she went on; "Aunt Eunice and all the people who make up what she calls her 'set' (meaning a sort of clan) are so hemmed in by social laws, so hampered on all sides by perfectly meaningless rules and customs, so taken up with details which are trivial and unessential—and very tiresome to themselves, but which they nevertheless take heed to—for what reason it is hard to make out—that at times they all seem like puppets moving at the pull of a string—with no freedom of motion at all and no spontaneity. It stifles me!"

"Go on," he urged when she paused, her fresh

impressions interesting him.

"I ask myself sometimes—Is all life a slavery, only in different forms? Every one seems to be in bondage of some sort; the men of Aunt Eunice's clan are slaves to the women; a man allows himself to become a mere money-making machine, for no other apparent reason than to keep his wife and daughters in idleness, or to give them opportunity to cultivate themselves. It seems that the man doesn't need time for culture. It's no objec-

tion to him if he does have some culture, but it must not interfere with his money-making. But the women must have leisure—for the study of art, for society, and other feminine occupations. Aunt Eunice says that if a man is a gentleman, he will work night and day to give his wife or daughter absolute leisure to do as she pleases. I don't see the sanity of it, or the justice. If a woman does not rear a family and make a home, or else work at some vocation, if she is simply the daughter of a household, spending her time cultivating herself in music and literature and gracing social affairs, of what significance is her existence in the economy of the universe? What point has her life?"

She turned to him with her old wistful appeal. These commonplace problems, so new to her, were evidently vexing her sorely.

"Is it, perhaps, enough just to be," he suggested, "if only one be lovely and good and a delight to others?"

"But," she objected, "is it possible to be anything worth while—anything strong and worthy—without work, effort, responsibility? I am looking on at life, not to judge and criticise, but only to learn; but sometimes judgment is forced upon me by what I see."

"And perhaps you, with your unsophisticated eyes, may be able to see deeper truth than is vouch-

safed to old duffers like us—your aunt and me, I mean."

"But," she answered impetuously, "whatever impresses me I try to see through your eyes as well as my own, wondering what you would think about this or that which bewilders or puzzles me. In everything that I do or see, your presence seems to be with me constantly. I have longed so unspeakably to have all these experiences with you actually and not just in fancy!"

Kinross felt the blood surge to his very forehead. He answered her with an abrupt question.

"Why did you leave my letter unanswered, Eunice?"

Her eyes fell. She did not reply at once.

" I-couldn't write to you."

"And why?"

"Aunt Eunice kept urging me to write. She said I must express my gratitude to you for all you had done for me. But my feeling for you is so far above gratitude—it is a feeling so much larger and greater than that! Yet," she added, her head drooping, "I could not write of it to you—and so I could not write at all—for there is to me a sacredness in my feeling for you which would seem belittled and even desecrated by my not being true to it. I could write to you out of the fulness of my heart—or be silent!"

He suddenly caught her hand hanging at her

side, and clasped it in a grip that hurt her. "If you had written to me out of the fulness of your heart, O you incomparable——" he checked himself and dropped her fingers with an abruptness that made her feel as though he had flung them off.

"Life is such a farce, Eunice," he answered coldly, "that, generally speaking, it is wiser to do as you did—to refrain from speaking out of the fulness of the heart. But what, may I ask, restrained you?"

She looked pained and hurt, both at his tone and his words.

"I feared," she answered with a gentle sadness, that I might weary you, Dr. Kinross."

His laugh sounded to her sardonic.

"Weary me? Let me tell you something! The night I saw you off on your train for New York, there was a sudden drop in my spiritual thermometer that left me torpid, bored, sick to death of the not-worth-whileness of things! After a few days I wrote to you, and the expectation of hearing from you revived me somewhat. But the expectation prolonged itself to a point where it ceased to be interesting and became tormenting. 'Why doesn't Eunice answer my letter?' was the only thought my brain contained day and night."

"But now that you know why, you say that you commend my 'wisdom' in keeping silent?"

"Ah, but what good did it serve?—for you see, here I am at your side—in spite of your wisdom, in spite of my own—for I, too, Eunice, have been acting wisely since we parted—else a whole month would not have passed without our looking again into each other's eyes!"

There was a passion in his voice that caught her breath.

"You have been repressing your feelings in staying away—your feelings for me?" she asked breathlessly. "Did you want to see me?" came her wistful question.

"Did I? Here I am!" was his answer.

"But," her eagerness suddenly dropped, and she spoke mournfully, "it can't last, you know."

"No. Your aunt is going to take you to Europe!"

"Yes."

"She says you are wild to go!"

"Oh!" She lifted her head and flung back a lock of hair from her eyes. "In spite of all the delights that wealth can give—what is it all when it can't feed the soul?—when the heart is always longing—for just one thing that——"She checked herself and again her head drooped.

"And that one thing, Eunice?"

She raised her eyes to his. "It is you I have wanted! Rather than go to Europe—so far away from you—I would bring back those days of last

summer on the farm—yes, even those days before we had spoken together at all. For at least I then

could see you every day face to face."

"Eunice! It's no use! We can't be 'wise,' you and I—we can't struggle against the inevitable! The power that draws you and me together is stronger than our wills—we must yield to it!"

She drew her hand away from his. "No, no! If you mean we must yield to it at the expense of

another girl's happiness-I will not!"

"Georgiana, you mean?"

"You are betrothed to her."

"The devil I am!"

"But you are 'as good as.'"

"That's her idea, not mine. I never originated it! And if I have any influence with myself——"

"You told me you loved her!"

"I spoke figuratively. I meant I loved youth, beauty, grace."

" Oh!"

"Don't you see?"

"Please to label your remarks to me, 'literal' or 'figurative.'" She was speaking quite seriously, with a look of bewilderment; "or I may misunderstand you painfully!"

"No, Eunice, you and I will not misunderstand each other again. For we shall speak the same

language—the language of our hearts!"

"But if it was not Miss Ellery, what was it

that kept you from me when you wanted to come?"

"I will tell you."

He drew a long, deep breath, then half turned to her as he walked beside her and talked.

"It was while the days dragged by when I was waiting for a letter from you, and my heart grew sick with hope deferred that a Great Truth began to dawn upon me. I came into the realisation that my whole horizon was coloured by the thought of Eunice; that in thinking of her I found my only interest, my only happiness; that in the meeting of her life and mine, the deepest needs of my nature had been met and fed; and at last I came face to face with the knowledge that she was all to me that a woman can be to a man; that I loved her utterly!"

Eunice moved at his side like one moving in a dream. For a moment the silence between them throbbed with their strong emotion.

"And then," he presently went on, the gravity of his voice calming her throbbing heart, "came my bitter struggle with myself. I was not willing to take advantage of your inexperience—before you had had an opportunity to see other men. I knew you cared for me, but how could I be sure that your feeling would bear the test of your larger knowledge and experience? Clearly my honourable course was to be silent, to withdraw

into the background of your life, until you should come into a mature understanding of your own heart.

"Then, the simplicity of the life I would have to offer you as the wife of a teacher, compared with the brilliant career you might have—possessed of large means—a man would have to think better of himself than I thought, to ask a woman to make such a sacrifice.

"The possibility that you might think me a fortune hunter I put aside as an unworthy thought of you. That your aunt might attribute such a motive to me—I was indifferent to that—though I believe she would favour me as a suitor, she's so daft about 'family.' And she's not mercenary either. So my own comparative poverty would not stand in my way with her.

"Then I reasoned that in denying my heart, I risked not only my own life's happiness, but yours as well. Fortune hunters would swarm like bees about you, and in your guilelessness, how easily you might be deceived into a wretched marriage! Why should I step aside for others even less worthy than myself? I wanted you now—now while that sweet wild-wood flavour was upon you! Perhaps you would never lose it if I took you to myself and kept you so close to me forever, that the world could not get near to you! Why should I leave it to others to enjoy the charming opening

up of your young mind to the wonderful panorama of life—for who could delight more than I in the unfolding of your beautiful spirit? Had I not discovered you? Why should I not have my reward? Why should I not woo you, marry you, travel with you all over the world, teach and guide you where I could and myself be taught and guided by your womanly loveliness? Eunice, I was almost appalled—when once I gave rein to myself—at the strength of my love for you, for I felt the hurt of it almost as much as the ecstasy!

"I tried to persuade myself that your love for me was as fundamental, as inevitable, as mine for you; but the very force of my own passion made me distrust the sophistries of my selfishness. I knew that if I would not degrade my great love for you, I must put your best welfare above my own desires. I must leave you free—until you had taken your bearings in the world, and had found yourself. And then, if it were not too late—

"That thought gripped my very soul!

"And so, Eunice, as I am a man and not a god, my love and not my reason, carried the day—and I am here with you!"

He stopped in the solitary path into which they had strayed, and opened his arms to her.

XXVII

I'm awfully sorry for you, but I can't help it," said Daisy, as one afternoon in October the two girls strolled about the campus; "I've got to tell you. You are labouring under the delusion that Kinross is in love with you—we can't, of course, understand how he can help being, when he had the chance of watching us for four weeks without our knowing it. But," she added in the tone of an oracle, "he is not! Better you should know it now while none of your feelings except your pride are mixed up and before you hurt poor Gateshead to the point of driving him into my arms."

"How can you possibly know anything of Dr. Kinross' feelings, Daisy?" Georgiana asked. "He is not a man to flaunt them before the public. And I don't suppose he has taken you into his confidence!"

"Oh, but he has!"

Georgiana turned and looked at her quickly. "What do you mean, Daisy?"

"He not a man to flaunt his feelings! Gracious!

He can't repress himself. He just has to let out, to every passerby!"

"And has he confided to you that he is not in love with me?" Georgiana smilingly in-

quired.

"He made me hear the whole story of Eunice —her turning out to be an heiress and the daughter of one of the oldest and best families in the country. Well, Georgiana, no man looks as he looked while speaking of that girl, unless he has gone the way of all flesh and become mad with love. You would have seen it for yourself, but for your prepossession that he loved you. What a chance I missed myself!—for if I'd dreamed that Pete was him-I mean he-I might have had a try at him myself, for I do like the creature rather -it isn't his fault that all the girls get silly about him. Yes," she said thoughtfully, "if I'd ever dreamed of his being himself. I certainly would have given my attention to his case, for I know the man is rather fond of me (you mayn't have noticed it) and my own private opinion is that we were made for each other. No hope for any of us now, though. Not even for you, Georgie. He's shelved! The Long-Lost Heiress has him. Whether he has her I don't know. I'd love to see him refused. I'd like to have a chance to refuse him myself. Though in such a contingency, if he continued to want me, I'd think about it. As for

you, Georgiana, you'll have to content yourself with Gateshead."

Georgiana laughed. "Your gratuitous surmises, my dear, are all wrong. How could a man like Dr. Kinross care for a mere country girl like Eunice, a sort of servant to the farmer's family? She was a little less illiterate than the rest, but a simple, uneducated country girl nevertheless; why, I never saw Dr. Kinross speak to her."

"He spoke to her, whether we saw him or not."

"He is too clever a man and too fastidious to become enamoured of an unsophisticated country girl," Georgiana repeated confidently. "The idea is absurd."

"He loves, adores, worships her!" Daisy affirmed. "He's mad about her! What, I ask, is more alluring to a world-weary cynic than rural

simplicity?"

"Rural simplicity," reasoned Georgiana, "is very well in its way. I think I don't underrate its value and its charm. But a highly complex mental and spiritual organism like that of Dr. Kinross could not be at one with a simple organism like that of the girl Eunice. It stands to reason."

"She was duplex or complex enough to land her fish!" Daisy vulgarly declared. "And to think, Georgiana, how you missed your chance when you had him all to yourself for a whole month!—for of course I wasn't in the way." "No doubt Dr. Kinross found my true self more quickly because of my unconsciousness of his presence than if we had come together in the ordinary way and been hampered by conventional forms and reserves."

"And maybe that's why he fell in love with Eunice instead of you."

"I don't follow your reasoning."

"Clear as mud! He found you too superior. Prefers rural simplicity. I ask you," she demanded with a theatrical wave of her hand, "why he is, now, at the very beginning of the term, away from college—in New York or Newport or some place? Echo answers, 'He's gone to see his Girl!'—Here comes your venerable young father."

President Ellery, white-haired and wrinkled, but vigorous, came towards them in the path, a cane in one hand, an open letter in the other.

"I have a letter from Dr. Kinross," he announced, waving it before them. "Bad news! He's resigned. But we shall not accept his resignation. We'll give him a year off and get his promise to return next fall—with his bride. He's about to be married and intends to spend a year in travelling with his wife in Europe and Asia."

"The unfortunate lady's name?" inquired Daisy, for Georgiana could not speak.

They waited, breathless, while President Ellery

slowly took out his eye-glasses, adjusted them and examined the letter.

"Miss Eunice Wolcott."

"Stung again!" cried Daisy, tottering.

The two girls walked on, while President

Ellery proceeded in the opposite direction.

"Please, Georgie, don't let it rattle you!" Daisy coaxed her, slipping her arm through her cousin's. "As I said in the beginning of my remarks to you this afternoon, none of your feelings are as yet engaged except your pride. Tell me," she demanded with an air of conceit, "can I read men? Am I observant? Am I cute and clever? Are my perceptions keen? My parting advice to you is, be kind to Gateshead, before it is yet too late and he saith in his heart, 'I have no pleasure in her.'"

Georgiana withdrew her arm from Daisy's. "I was mistaken in Dr. Kinross," she said with dignity.

"So it would seem."

"He is, after all, commonplace. He was unworthy of the high friendship I gave him."

"'If you want that, you must climb'-he

wasn't husky enough to do it."

"I had fancied him a man," said Georgiana, "to whom the low plane of the average marriage would be impossible; one whom the Universe would call only to the highest union. But he was

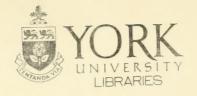
quite incapable of meeting me. A country girl's pink and white prettiness—" she shrugged her shoulders, leaving her remark unfinished.

"It only goes to show," said Daisy, "that there isn't the least use sporting up for a mere man. Nor yet in making an effort. I don't really believe Eunice tried for Pete. After this, I'm going to live up to my favourite motto, Let Things Slide. You come out better in the end."

THE END



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